リュウの道　石森章太郎
初出●講談社「週刊少年マガジン」1970年7月17日第30号～10月4日第41号

石ノ森章太郎萬画大全集
ISHInoMORI SHOTARO COMPLETE COMIC WORKS

リュウの道 7

THE WAY OF RYU

石森章太郎 ISHIMORI SHOTARO

Kadokawa Comics 角川書店
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ILLUSTRATION / ISHInoMORI SHOTARO, NAGANO TSUYOSHI
DESIGN / KAZUMI TADAHIRO [BE-ENTO]
PRINT / KOSAIDO PRINTING CO , LTD

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ISHInoMORI SHOTARO COMPLETE COMIC WORKS

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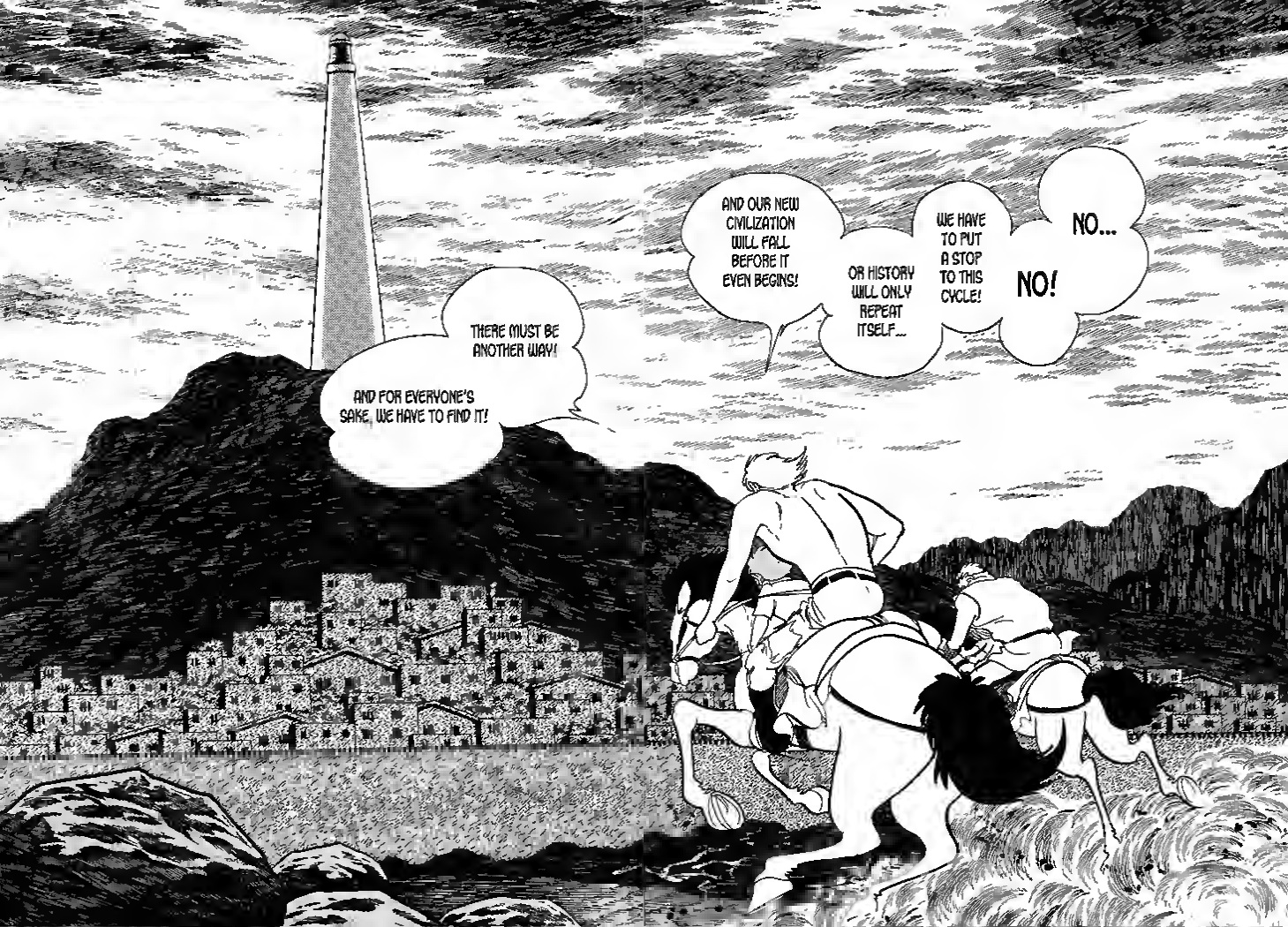
② あやつり(承前)

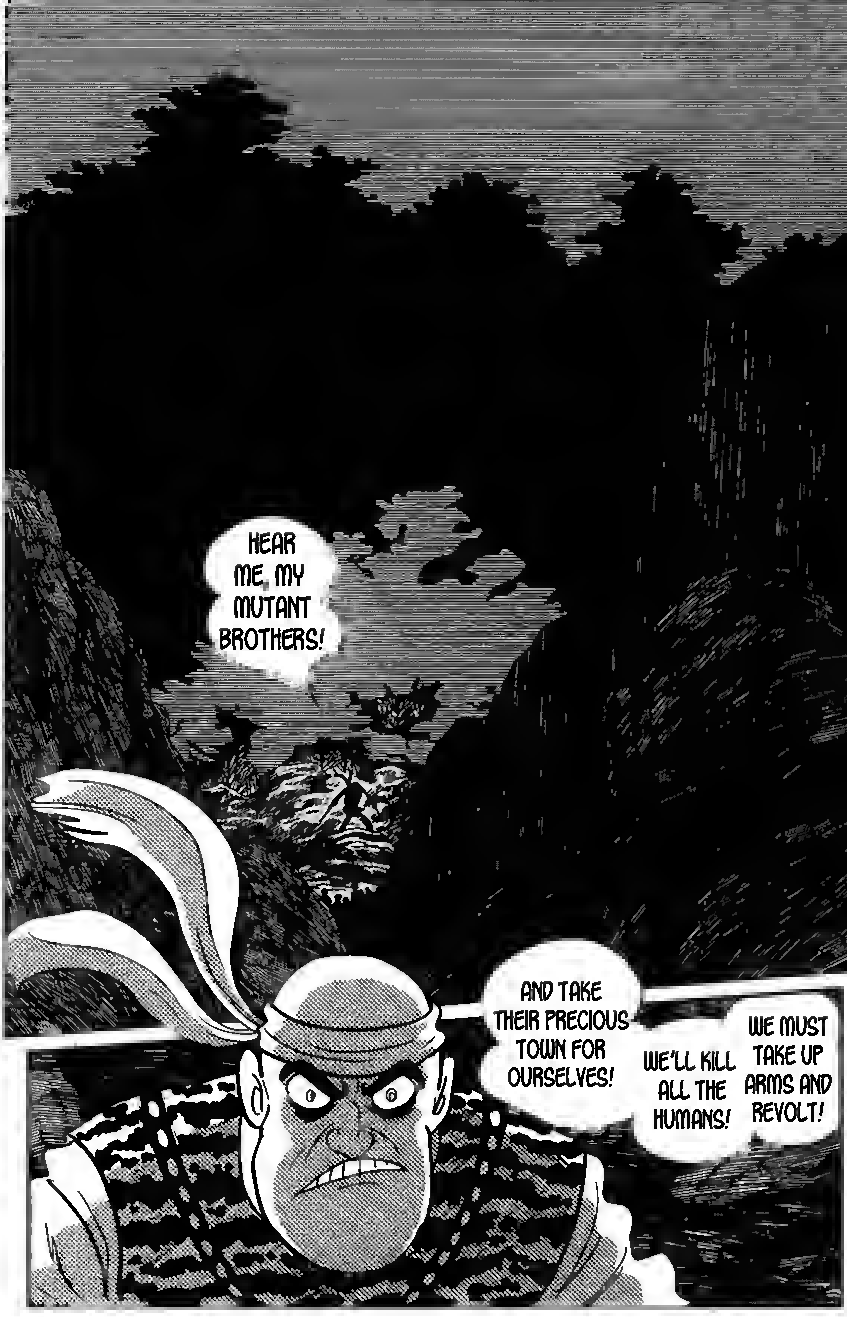
OH, MY GOD!
SO MANY OF OUR MEN HAVE BEEN KILLED!
THAT'S TO BE EXPECTED. THIS IS THE FACE OF WAR.
THERE ARE NO REAL WINNERS...
EVEN THE SUPPOSED VICTOR MUST SACRIFICE.
DAMN IT!
IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF THOSE WORMS!

NO, RYU...
THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED EVEN WITHOUT THE WORMS.
IT'S BECAUSE OF THEM THAT SO MANY ARE DEAD!
SINCE ALWAYS, HUMANS...
...ESPECIALLY THE ONES WITH GREAT POWER...
...AND TAKE AWAY THE THINGS WE'VE BUILT FOR OURSELVES.
...WOULD'YE COME AFTER US TO SATISFY THEIR BLOODLUST...
PERHAPS THE "APOSTLES" OR SOME OTHER ENEMY...
IT'S HAPPENED COUNTLESS TIMES, RYU.
THIS IS ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE TIMES.
...AND KEEPING THE PEOPLE THEY ALREADY CONTROL IN LINE.
...HAVE CONSTANTLY WAGED WAR WITH THE INTENT OF CONTROLLING OTHERS...

AT THE END OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, THE WORLD WAS MIRED IN CONFLICT.
TO SATISFY THEIR DESIRES...
...THE LARGER POWERS CONVINCED SMALLER NATIONS TO JOIN THEM...
...CREATING EVEN BIGGER DIVISIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE!
THEY TRANSFORMED INNOCENT FAMILY MEMBERS INTO SWORN ENEMIES.
AND THE BLOODSHED THAT CAME OUT OF IT WAS ONLY MADE WORSE BY THEIR IGNORANCE.

THE OUTLINE OF WAR IS ALWAYS THE SAME!
NEITHER THE TIME OR THE PLACE MATTERS...
SO WHAT DOES THAT MAKE US? ARE YOU AND I JUST COGS IN THE WAR MACHINE?
...WE GOT OUR OWN PEOPLE KILLED?!
...THE SAME WORMS WHO TRIED TO STOP US FROM BUILDING UP OUR TOWN, OUR SOCIETY...
SO BECAUSE WE KILLED THE SOLDIERS THAT WERE BEING MANIPULATED BY THOSE WORMS...


THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY!
AND FOR EVERYONE'S SAKE, WE HAVE TO FIND IT!
AND OUR NEW CIVILIZATION WILL FALL BEFORE IT EVEN BEGINS!
OR HISTORY WILL ONLY REPEAT ITSELF...
WE HAVE TO PUT A STOP TO THIS CYCLE!
NO...
NO!


HEAR ME, MY MUTANT BROTHERS!
AND TAKE THEIR PRECIOUS TOWN FOR OURSELVES!
WE'LL KILL ALL THE HUMANS!
WE MUST TAKE UP ARMS AND REVOLT!

YOU'LL DO NO SUCH THING, CONDOR!
WE MUST EXTERMINATE THEM!
THIS WORLD ISN'T FIT FOR THE OLD HUMANS! IT BELONGS TO US, THE NEW BREED OF MEN!
HUH?
HE'LL BE THE FIRST TO DIE!
THERE HE IS! HE'S THE LEADER OF THE OLD HUMANS!
I'VE BEEN SEARCHING ALL OVER TOWN FOR YOU.
CHARGE!

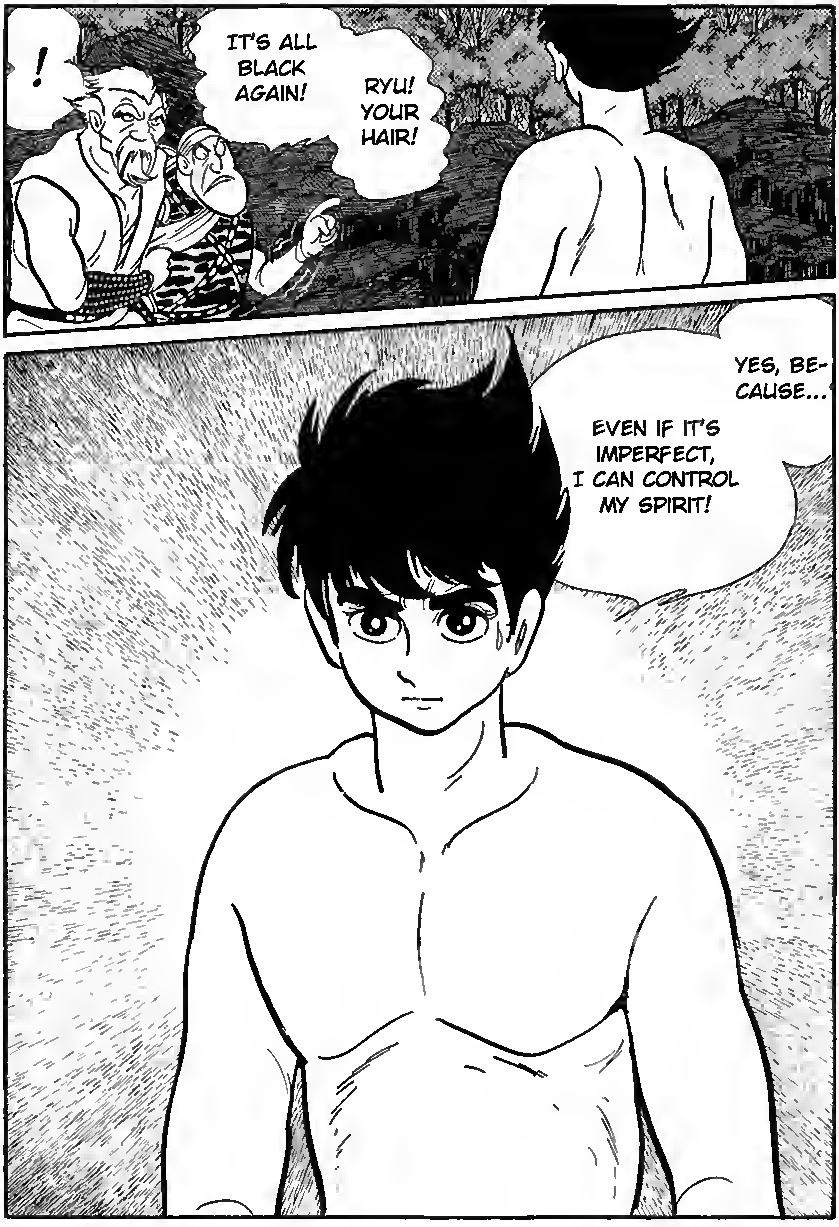
ナ
ナニ
ダーン
ドン

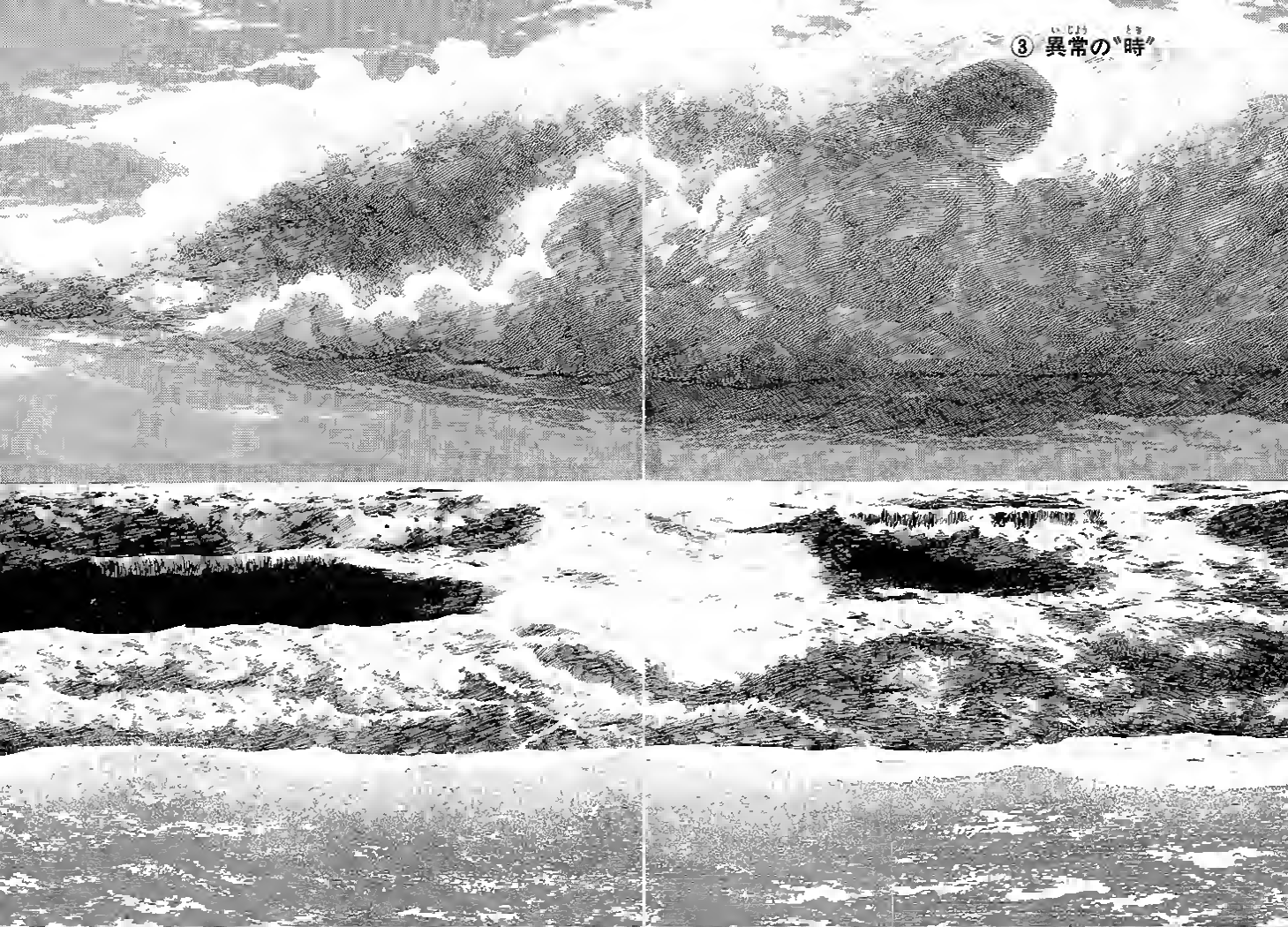
AHH...
KHHH...
HUFF...
GOT YOU.

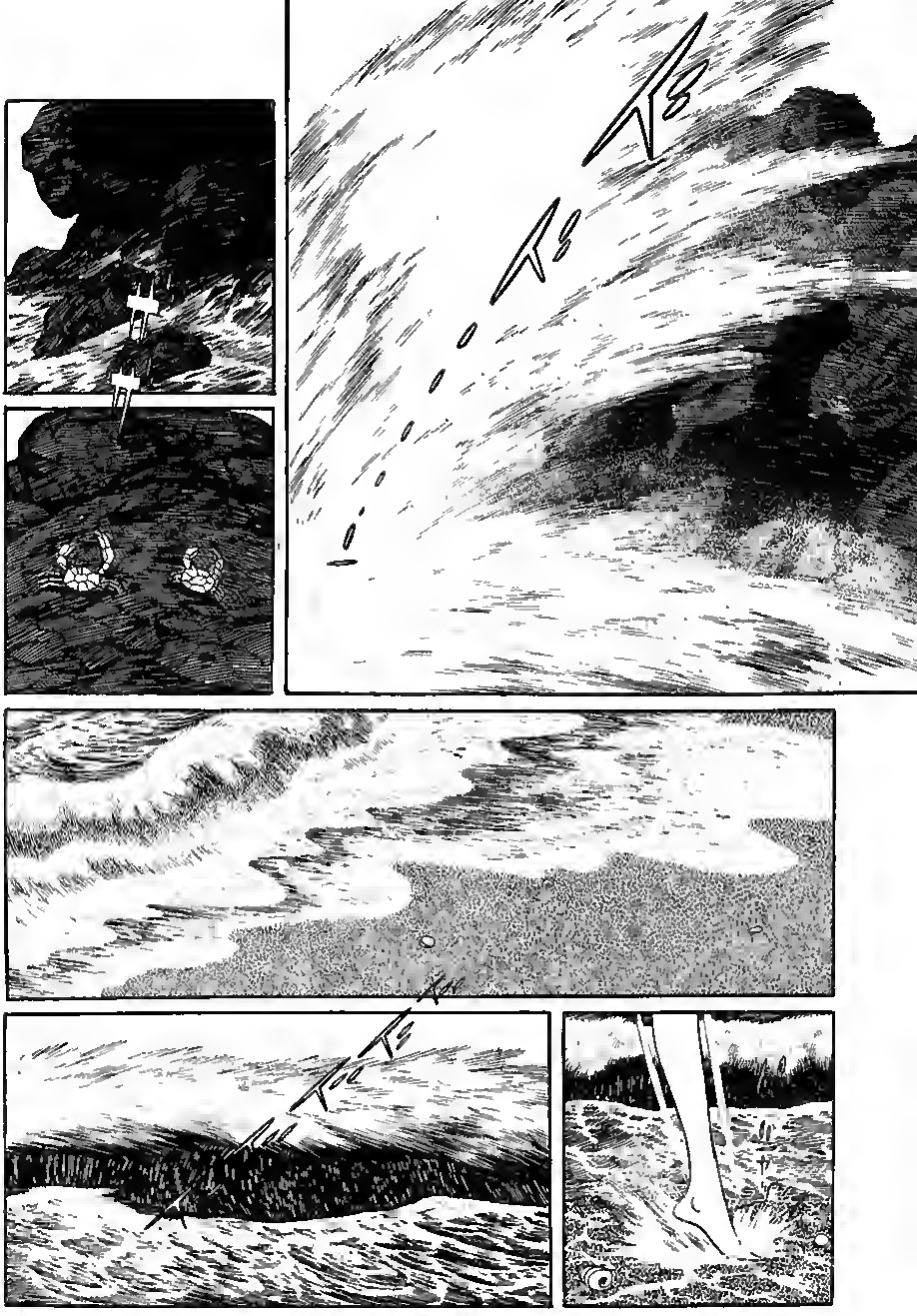
URGH...
CONDOR!
IT WAS ME, CON-DOR.
BUT... WHAT... WHAT HAPPENED? WHO DID THIS?
MY ARM!
GAH!
R-RYU...?
THERE WAS NO CHOICE! I DID IT TO SAVE YOUR LIFE!
WHAT?! YOU?!

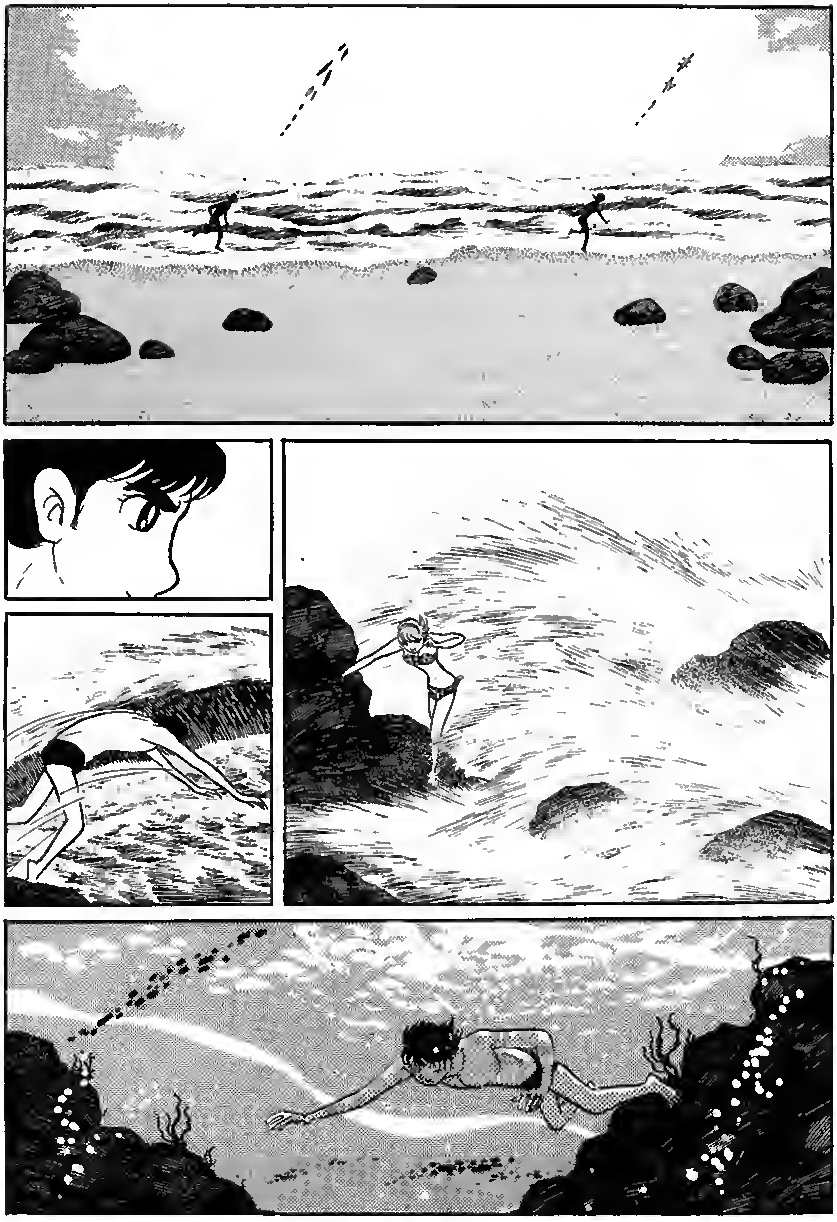
...AND THEN STAY NEXT TO YOU SO IT WOULD LOOK FOR A NEW HOST.
IN ORDER TO GET THE WORM TO LEAVE YOUR BODY I HAD TO WOUND YOU SEVERELY...
YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO JUSTIFY CUTTING OFF MY DAMN ARM, AREN'T YOU?
THERE'S NO WAY! YOU LOOK FINE!
YOU WERE WOUN-DED?!
THE WORMS NEVER TOOK ME AS A HOST WHEN I WAS CAPTURED. THEY WON'T USE PEOPLE WHO ARE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED.
ARE YOU MOCKING ME?
TO GET JIMMY AND CYCLOPS OUT OF THERE, I NEEDED TO BE HEALED!
I THOUGHT HARD ABOUT WHO COULD'VE HEALED ME.

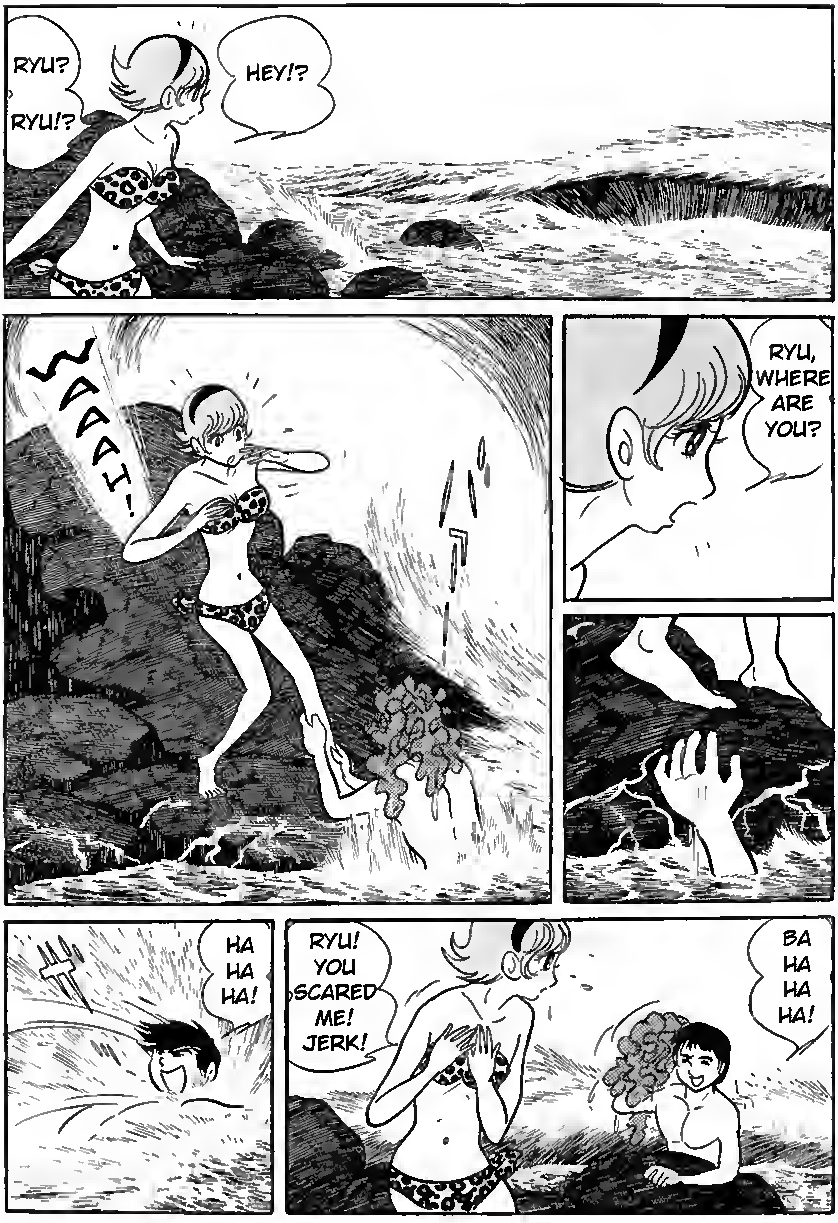
BY THE POWER OF MY CONVICTION!
YEAH...
MY BODY HEALED ITSELF OVERNIGHT...
ARE YOU SAYING YOU HEALED YOURSELF JUST BY WANTING IT?
IN OTHER WORDS THE MIND, THE SPIRIT, PLAYS A GREAT ROLE IN THE HEALTH OF THE HUMAN BODY.
AND IT'S TRUE!
THERE'S AN OLD SAYING... ABOUT "A SOUND MIND IN A SOUND BODY."
THE SPIRIT CAN CONQUER THE BODY.
PROVIDED YOU KNOW HOW TO USE YOUR MIND.
AH...
OH, MY...
WHOA...
REGENERATING DAMAGED CELLS...
ELIMI-NATING VIRUSES...


!
IT'S ALL BLACK AGAIN!
RYU! YOUR HAIR!
YES, BECAUSE...
EVEN IF IT'S IMPERFECT, I CAN CONTROL MY SPIRIT!

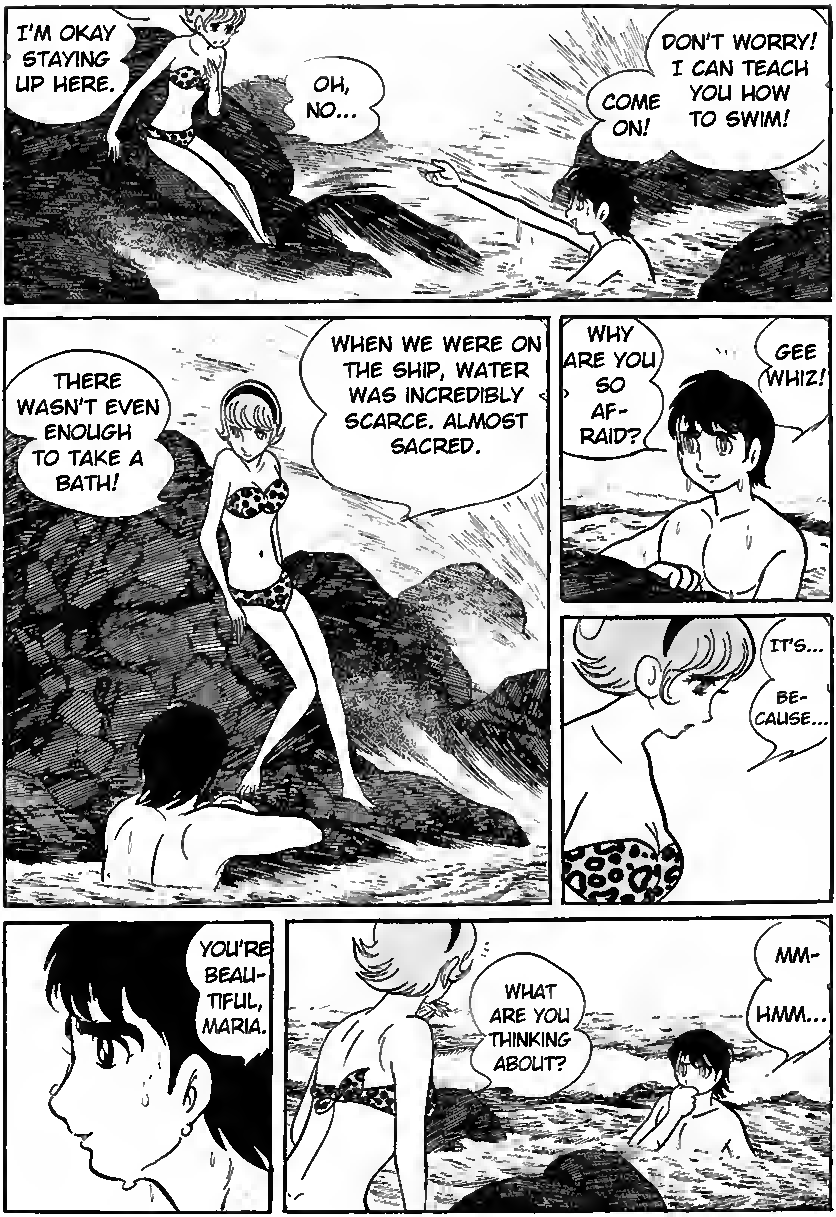




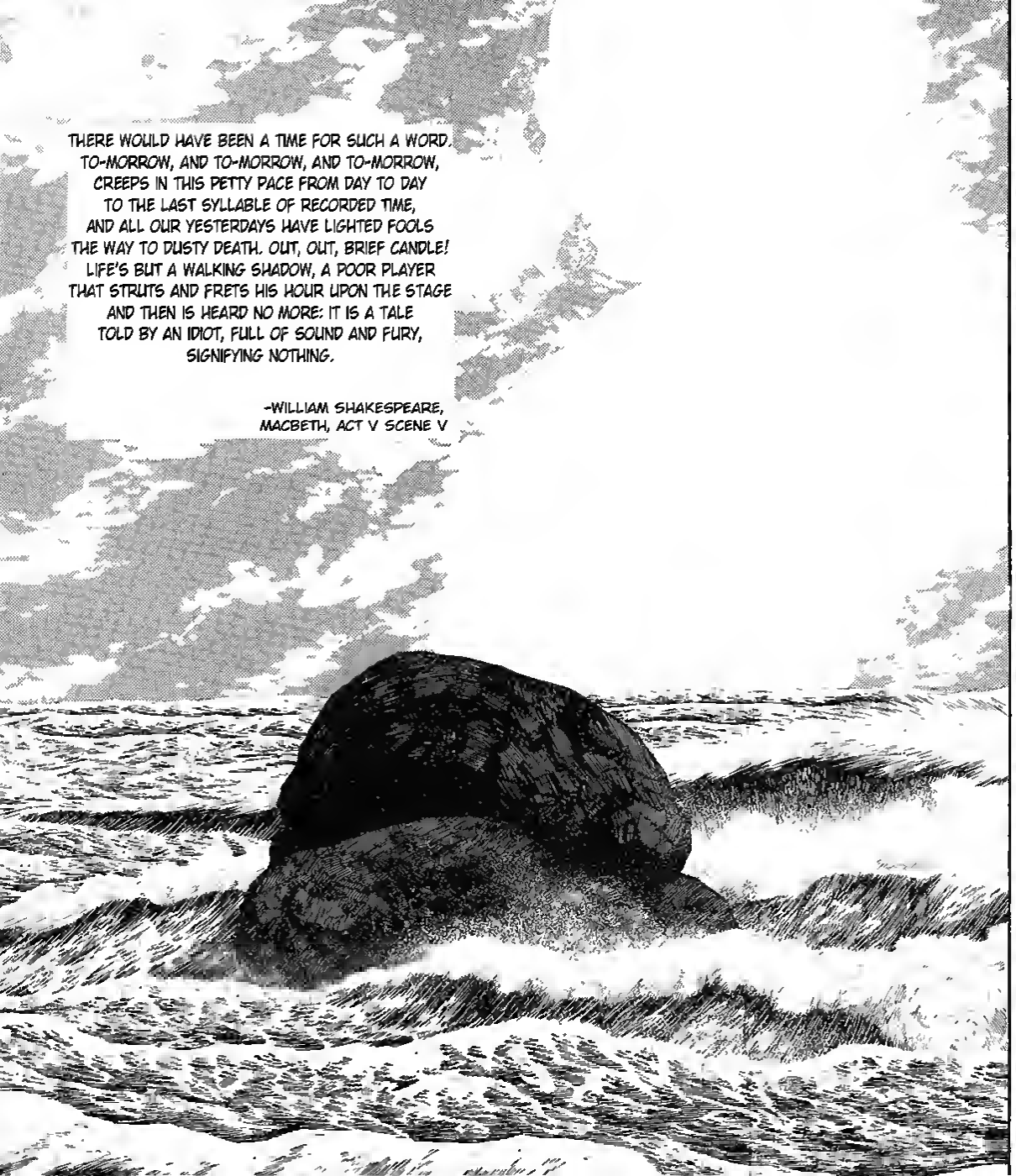


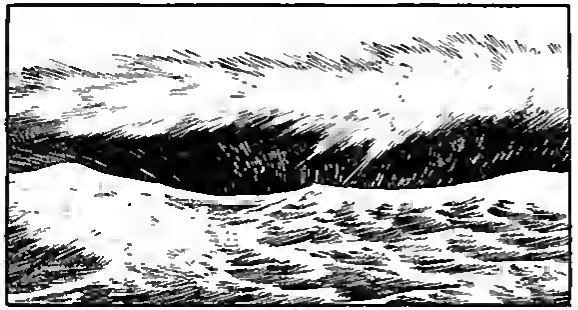

RYU?
RYU!?
HEY!?
WAAH!
RYU, WHERE ARE YOU?
HA HA HA!
RYU! YOU SCARED ME! JERK!
BA HA HA HA!

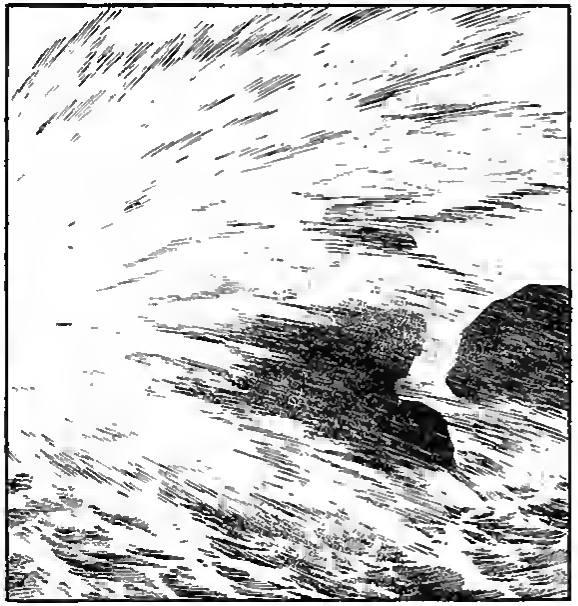
.....
HEY MARIA! COME ON IN!
THE WATER'S FINE!
I'D LOVE TO, BUT I CAN'T SWIM!
WHAT? SWIMMING IS EASY! COME ON!
BUT... I'M SCARED!


I'M OKAY STAYING UP HERE.
OH, NO...
COME ON!
DON'T WORRY! I CAN TEACH YOU HOW TO SWIM!
THERE WASN'T EVEN ENOUGH TO TAKE A BATH!
WHEN WE WERE ON THE SHIP, WATER WAS INCREDIBLY SCARCE. ALMOST SACRED.
WHY ARE YOU SO AF-RAID?
GEE WHIZ!
IT'S...
BE-CAUSE...
YOU'RE BEAU-TIFUL, MARIA.
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?
MM-HMM...

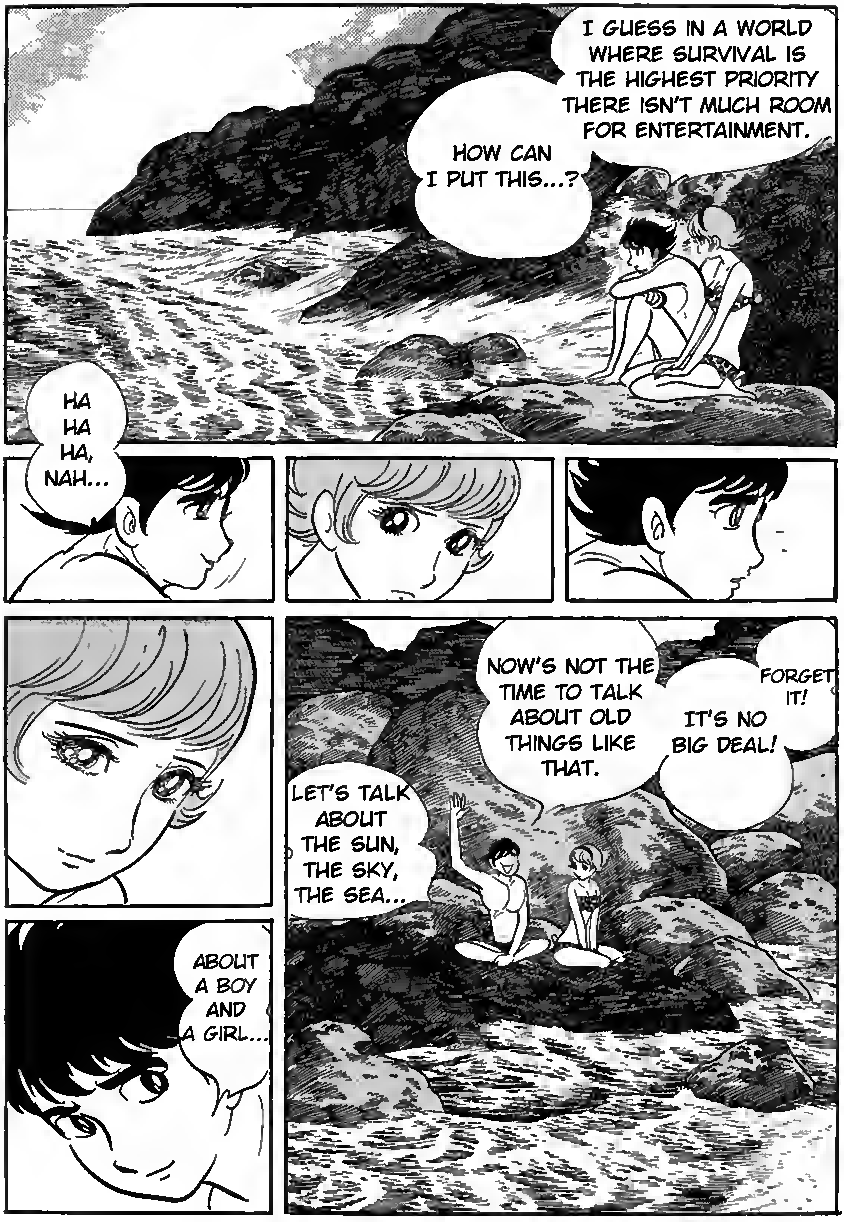
AH...
AND THAT BODY... JUST... WOW!
YOU'RE IN GOOD SHAPE. THE COLOR HAS COME BACK TO YOUR SKIN...
RYU, YOU'RE MAKING ME...


THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN A TIME FOR SUCH A WORD.
TO-MORROW, AND TO-MORROW, AND TO-MORROW,
CREEPS IN THIS PETTY PACE FROM DAY TO DAY
TO THE LAST SYLLABLE OF RECORDED TIME,
AND ALL OUR YESTERDAYS HAVE LIGHTED FOOLS
THE WAY TO DUSTY DEATH. OUT, OUT, BRIEF CANDLE!
LIFE'S BUT A WALKING SHADOW, A POOR PLAYER
THAT STRUTS AND FRETS HIS HOUR UPON THE STAGE
AND THEN IS HEARD NO MORE: IT IS A TALE
TOLD BY AN IDIOT, FULL OF SOUND AND FURY,
SIGNIFYING NOTHING.
-WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
MACBETH, ACT V SCENE V





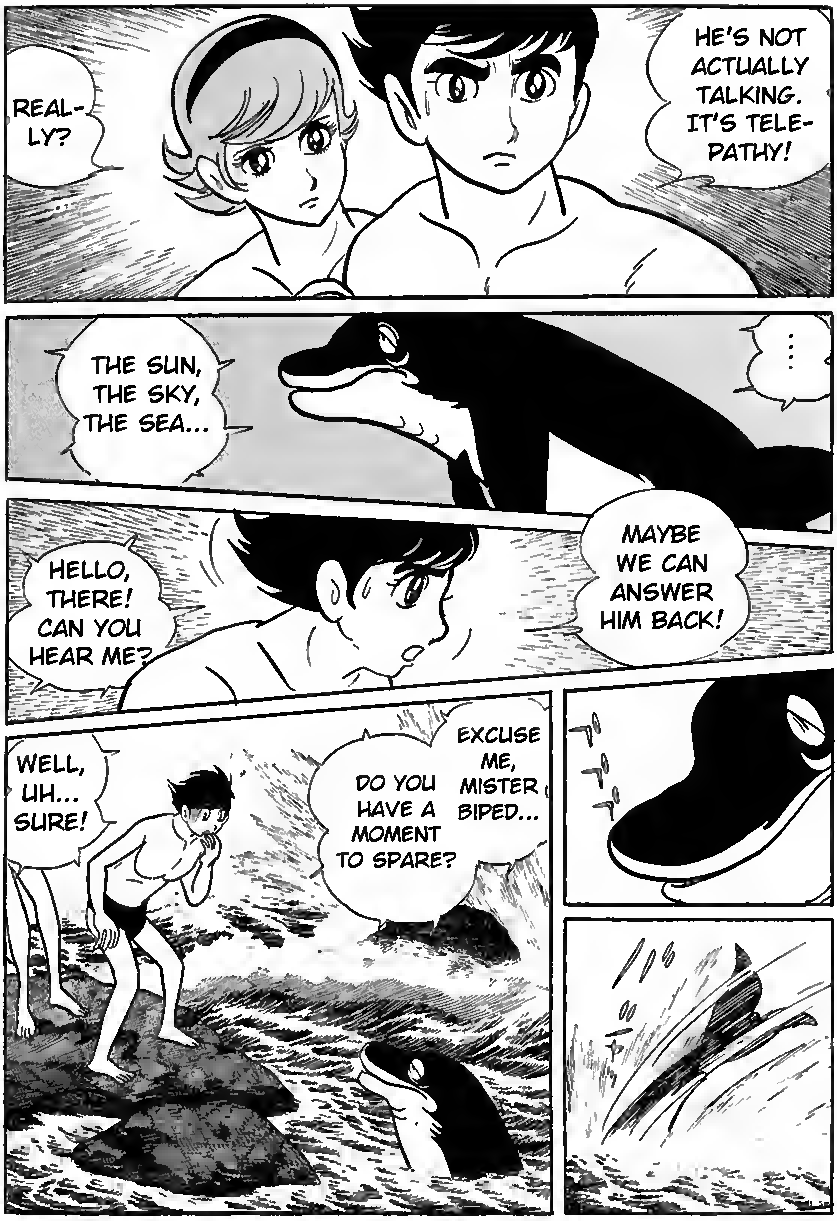
IT'S A MONOLOGUE FROM SHAKE-SPEARE'S MACBETH
LET'S SEE...
"MAC-BETH"?
"SHAKE-SPEARE"?
HUH?
I DUNNO. IT JUST CAME TO ME. I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I KNEW IT.
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?
A "PLAY-WRIGHT"?
YES, HE WAS A PLAYWRIGHT FROM ENGLAND.
I GUESS YOU DIDN'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME FOR PLAYS ON THE SHIP.
OH, RIGHT.

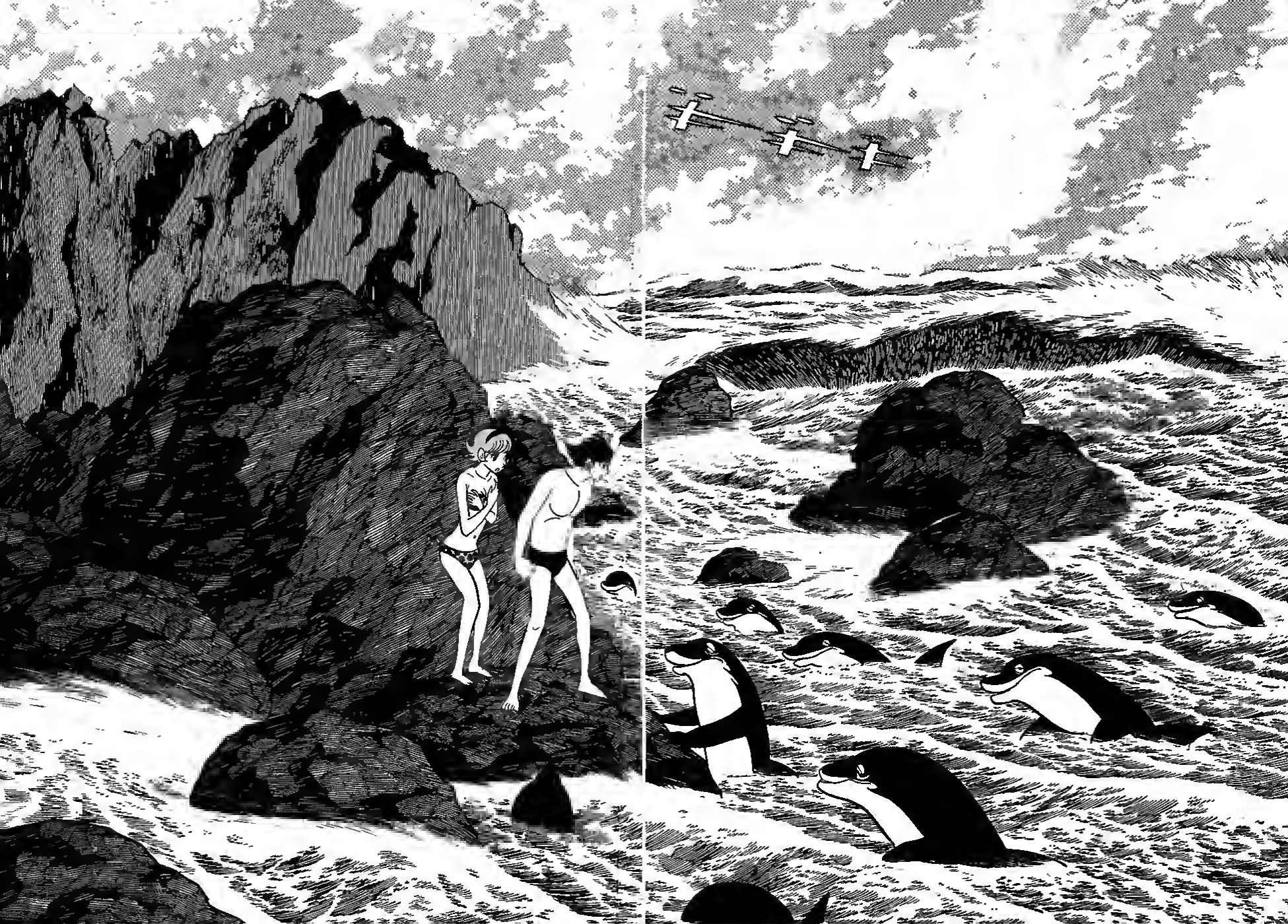

I GUESS IN A WORLD WHERE SURVIVAL IS THE HIGHEST PRIORITY THERE ISN'T MUCH ROOM FOR ENTERTAINMENT.
HOW CAN I PUT THIS...?
HA HA HA, NAH...
FORGET IT!
IT'S NO BIG DEAL!
NOW'S NOT THE TIME TO TALK ABOUT OLD THINGS LIKE THAT.
LET'S TALK ABOUT THE SUN, THE SKY, THE SEA...
ABOUT A BOY AND A GIRL...

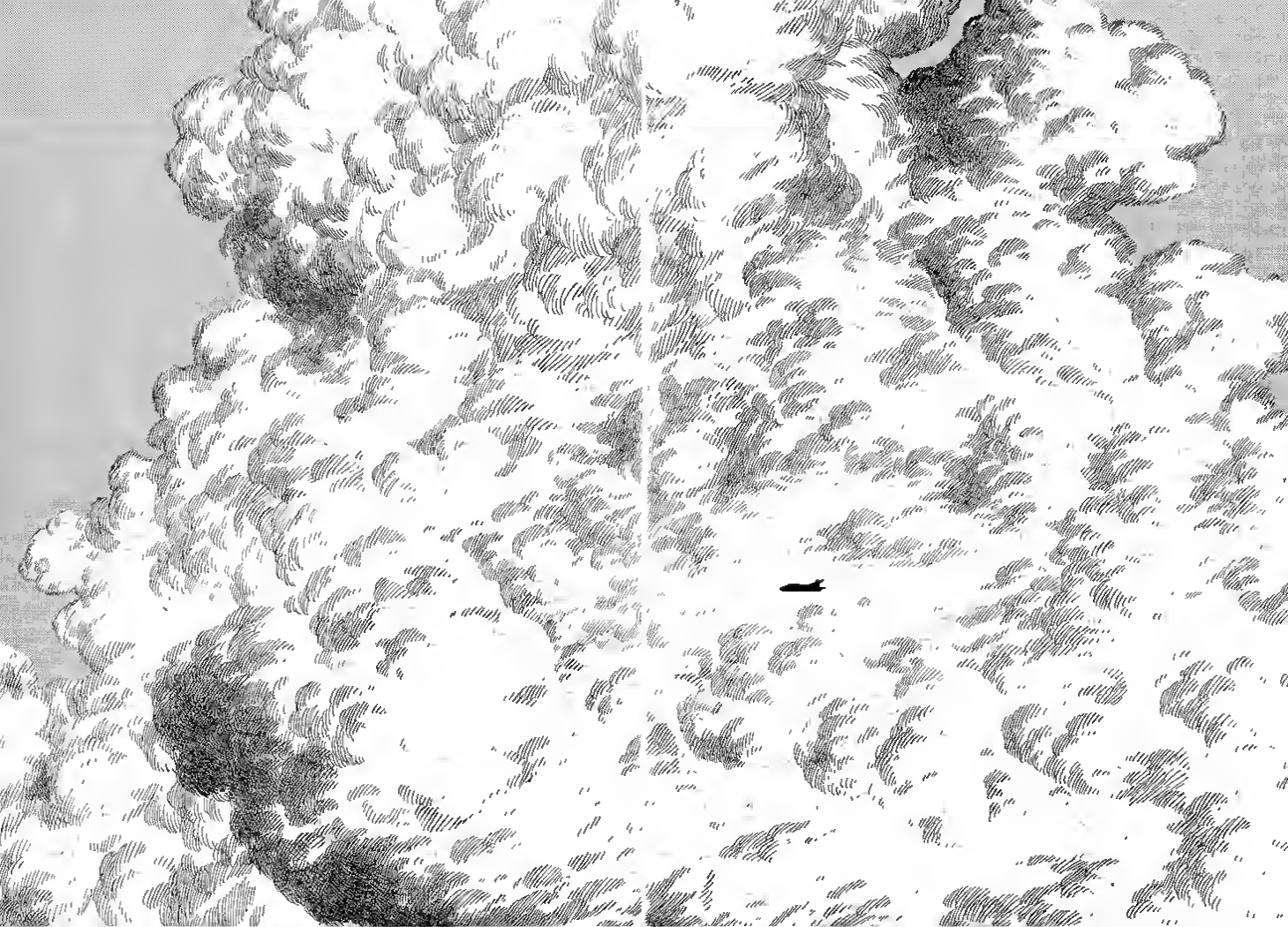
WHAT THE...?

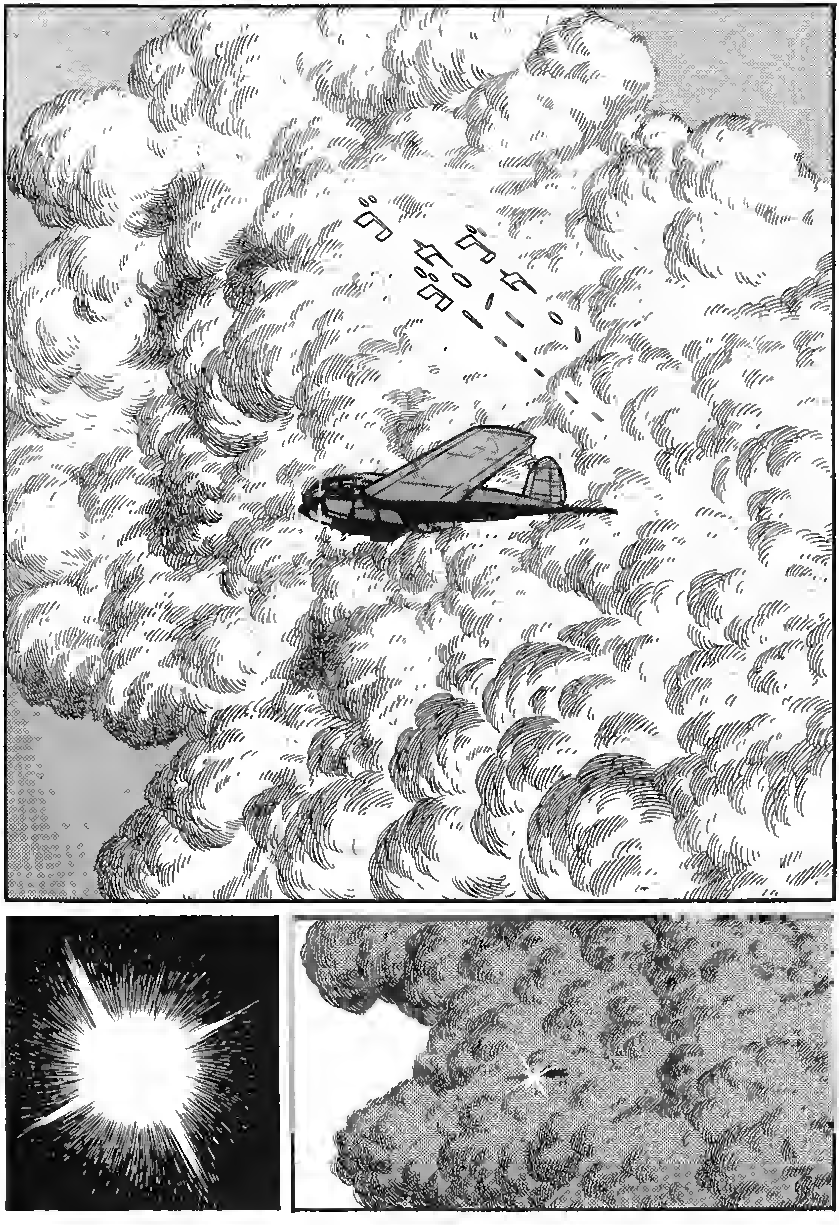
RYU?
...
SOMEBODY'S WATCHING US!
WHAT?!

HELLO MY FRIENDS!
UH, WHAT? A DOL-PHIN?
A TALKING DOL-PHIN?
SAY WHAT?
THE SUN, THE SKY, THE SEA...
FOR BOTH YOU AND I, TODAY...
...IS A BEAUTIFUL DAY, IS IT NOT?

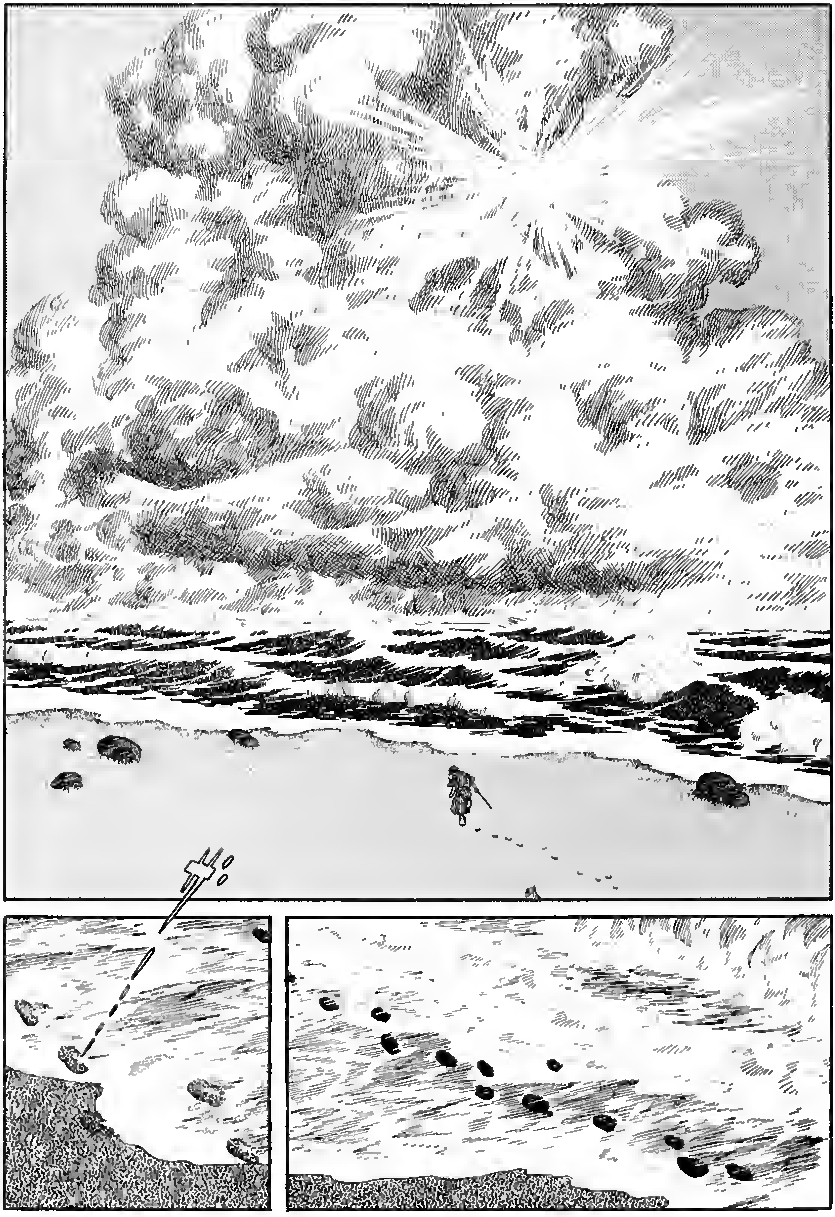

REAL-LY?
...
HE'S NOT ACTUALLY TALKING. IT'S TELE-PATHY!
THE SUN, THE SKY, THE SEA...
...
HELLO, THERE! CAN YOU HEAR ME?
MAYBE WE CAN ANSWER HIM BACK!
WELL, UH... SURE!
EXCUSE ME, MISTER BIPED... DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT TO SPARE?
ピピピ
ピー

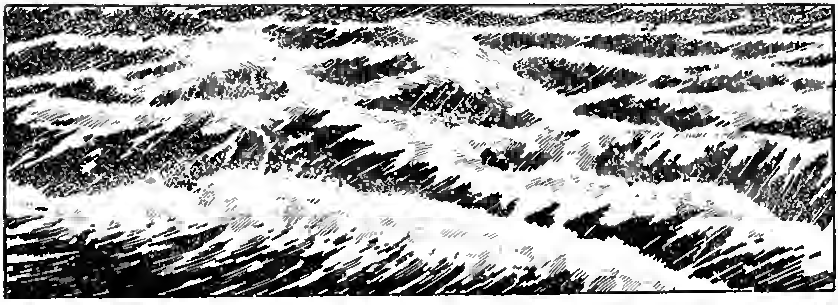


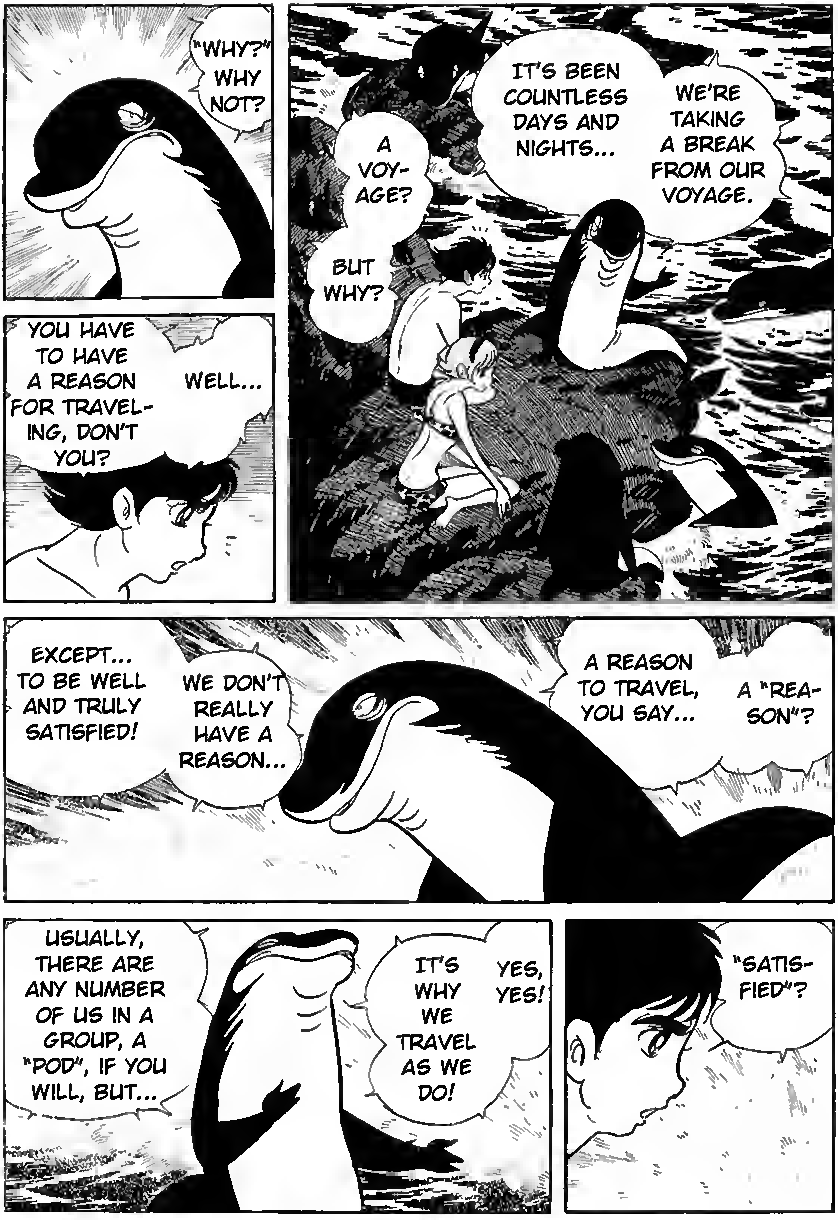


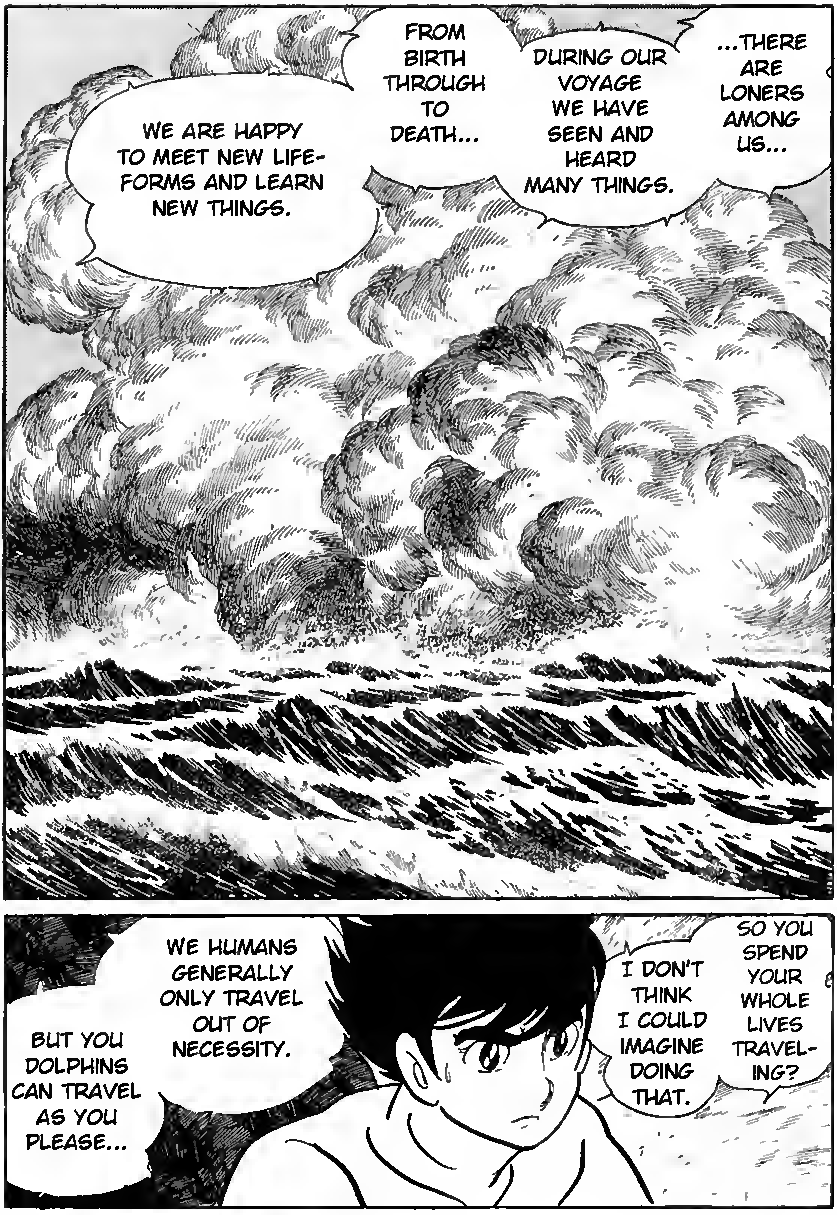


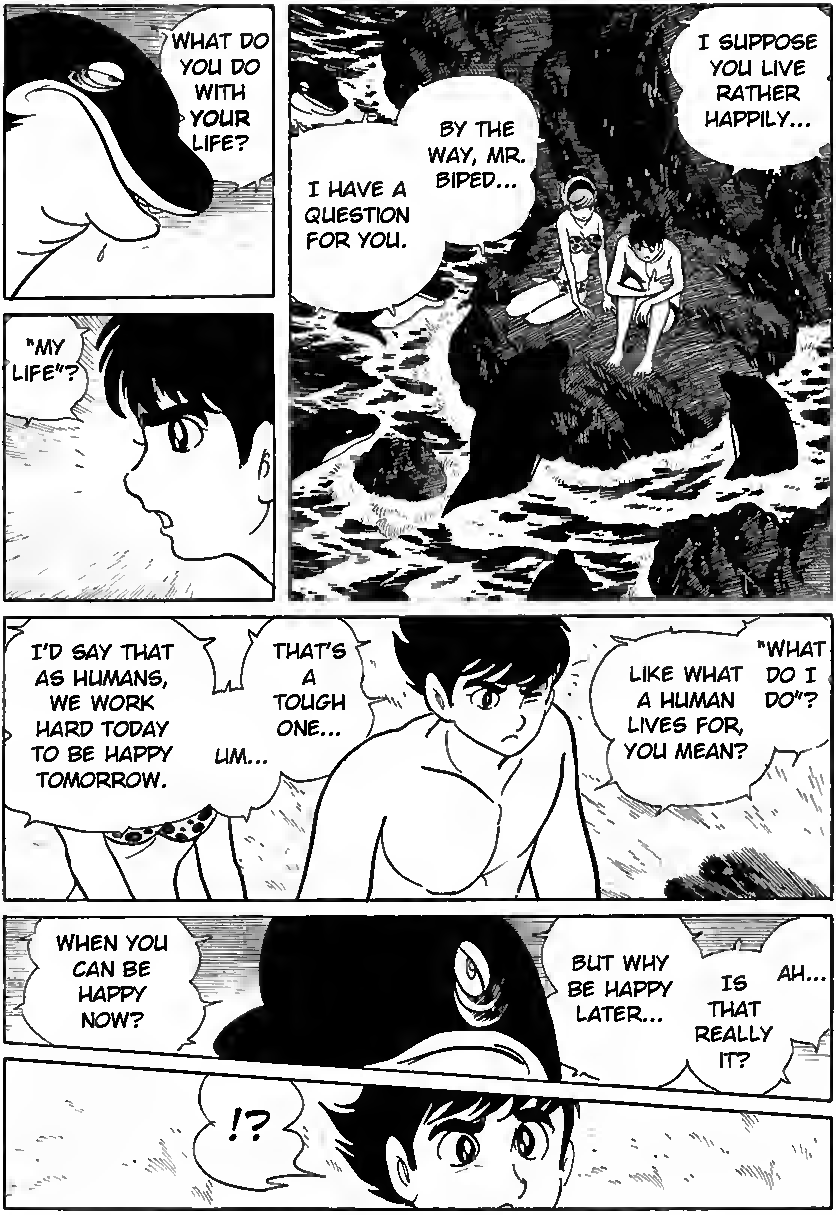
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

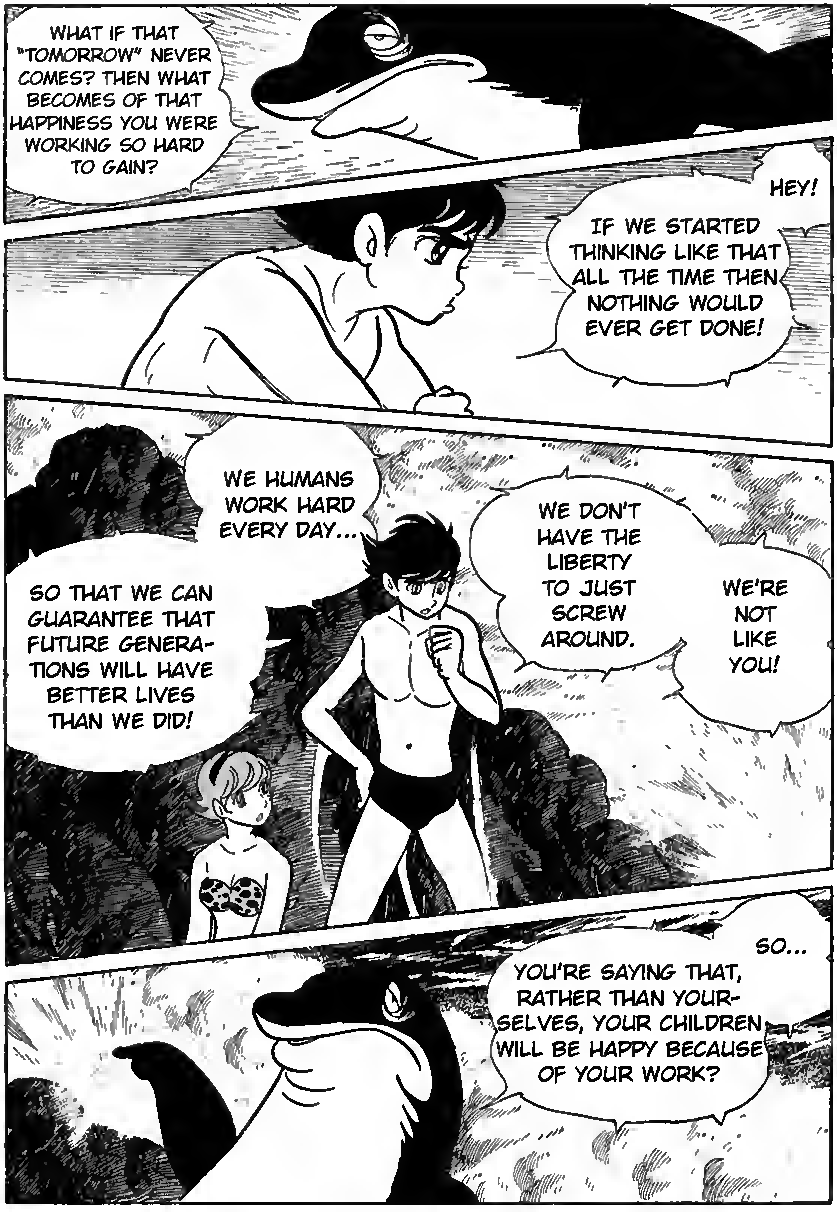


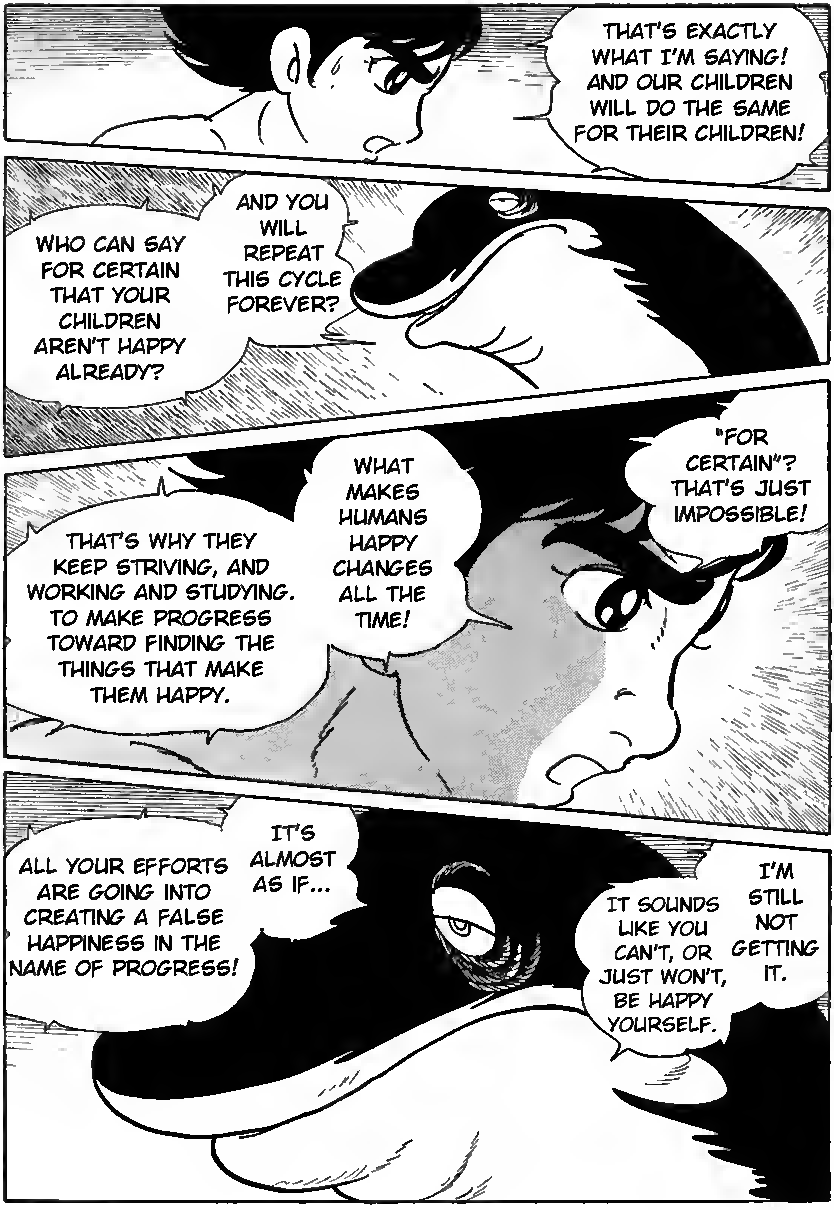



"WHY?" WHY NOT?
IT'S BEEN COUNTLESS DAYS AND NIGHTS...
WE'RE TAKING A BREAK FROM OUR VOYAGE.
A VOY-AGE?
BUT WHY?
YOU HAVE TO HAVE A REASON FOR TRAVEL-ING, DON'T YOU?
WELL...
EXCEPT... TO BE WELL AND TRULY SATISFIED!
WE DON'T REALLY HAVE A REASON...
A REASON TO TRAVEL, YOU SAY...
A "REA-SON"?
USUALLY, THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF US IN A GROUP, A "POD", IF YOU WILL, BUT...
IT'S WHY WE TRAVEL AS WE DO!
YES, YES!
"SATIS-FIED"?


WE ARE HAPPY TO MEET NEW LIFE-FORMS AND LEARN NEW THINGS.
FROM BIRTH THROUGH TO DEATH...
DURING OUR VOYAGE WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD MANY THINGS.
...THERE ARE LONERS AMONG US...
BUT YOU DOLPHINS CAN TRAVEL AS YOU PLEASE...
WE HUMANS GENERALLY ONLY TRAVEL OUT OF NECESSITY.
I DON'T THINK I COULD IMAGINE DOING THAT.
SO YOU SPEND YOUR WHOLE LIVES TRAVEL-ING?


WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR LIFE?
"MY LIFE"?
I SUPPOSE YOU LIVE RATHER HAPPILY...
BY THE WAY, MR. BIPED...
I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU.
"WHAT DO I DO"?
LIKE WHAT A HUMAN LIVES FOR, YOU MEAN?
UM...
THAT'S A TOUGH ONE...
I'D SAY THAT AS HUMANS, WE WORK HARD TODAY TO BE HAPPY TOMORROW.
AH...
IS THAT REALLY IT?
BUT WHY BE HAPPY LATER...
WHEN YOU CAN BE HAPPY NOW?
!?

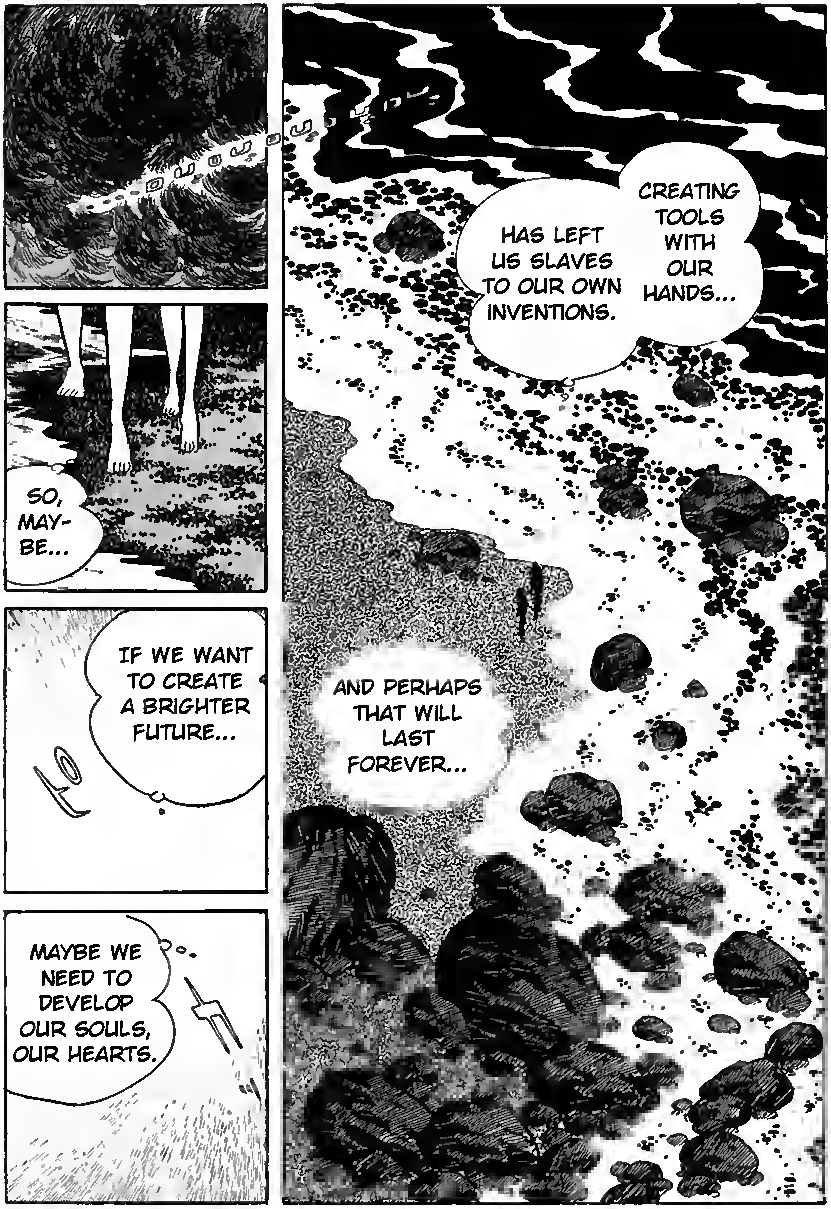

WHAT IF THAT "TOMORROW" NEVER COMES? THEN WHAT BECOMES OF THAT HAPPINESS YOU WERE WORKING SO HARD TO GAIN?
HEY!
IF WE STARTED THINKING LIKE THAT ALL THE TIME THEN NOTHING WOULD EVER GET DONE!
WE HUMANS WORK HARD EVERY DAY...
SO THAT WE CAN GUARANTEE THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS WILL HAVE BETTER LIVES THAN WE DID!
WE DON'T HAVE THE LIBERTY TO JUST SCREW AROUND.
WE'RE NOT LIKE YOU!
SO...
YOU'RE SAYING THAT, RATHER THAN YOURSELVES, YOUR CHILDREN WILL BE HAPPY BECAUSE OF YOUR WORK?

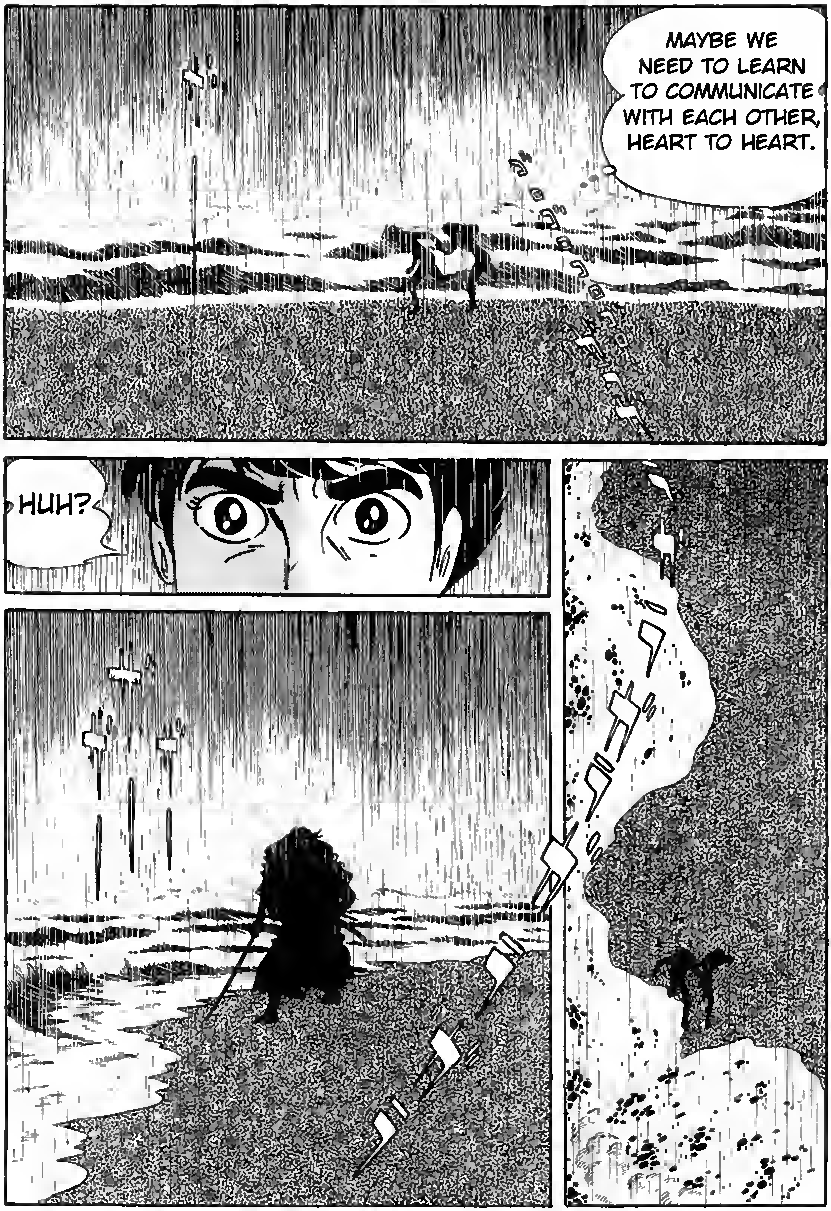

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'M SAYING! AND OUR CHILDREN WILL DO THE SAME FOR THEIR CHILDREN!
AND YOU WILL REPEAT THIS CYCLE FOREVER?
WHO CAN SAY FOR CERTAIN THAT YOUR CHILDREN AREN'T HAPPY ALREADY?
"FOR CERTAIN"? THAT'S JUST IMPOSSIBLE!
WHAT MAKES HUMANS HAPPY CHANGES ALL THE TIME!
THAT'S WHY THEY KEEP STRIVING, AND WORKING AND STUDYING. TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD FINDING THE THINGS THAT MAKE THEM HAPPY.
I'M STILL NOT GETTING IT.
IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU CAN'T, OR JUST WON'T, BE HAPPY YOURSELF.
IT'S ALMOST AS IF...
ALL YOUR EFFORTS ARE GOING INTO CREATING A FALSE HAPPINESS IN THE NAME OF PROGRESS!

IF "PROGRESS" MEANS THE SAME THING TO YOU AS "INCREASING YOUR SATISFACTION" OR "LIFTING YOUR SPIRIT"...
THEN WHY NOT LIVE LIKE US DOLPHINS?
ARGH...
GRR...
IT'S HARD TO IMAG-INE
LIS-TEN HERE!
MEN, GOOD MEN, AREN'T SELF-CENTERED LIKE THAT! WE THINK ABOUT THE NEEDS OF OTHERS!
THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE IS LIKE THAT!
...HELP-ING MY FELLOW MAN!
WE'RE WILLING TO SACRIFICE OUR OWN HAPPINESS FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS. THAT'S WHAT MATTERS TO ME...
AH, HA! NOW WE'RE ON THE SAME PAGE.
THE HAPPINESS OF ONE IS THE HAPPINESS OF OTHERS!
AND THE FREEDOM OF ONE IS NEVER SACRIFICED AT THE COST OF THE GROUP.

WAIT, WAIT WAIT. I UNDER-STAND NOW...
WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...
JUST LOOK AT YOUR LADY FRIEND THERE. SHE HAS NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON AND IT SHOWS.
I'M STARTING TO GET IT NOW. WHAT YOU ACQUIRE ISN'T BEING SHARED AND SO THERE'S NO "PROGRESS".
YOU INEVITABLY MAKE PROGRESS NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE!
THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL IMMEDIATELY BECOME THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE GROUP, AND THUS...
IS THAT IN YOUR GROUP, YOUR "POD"...

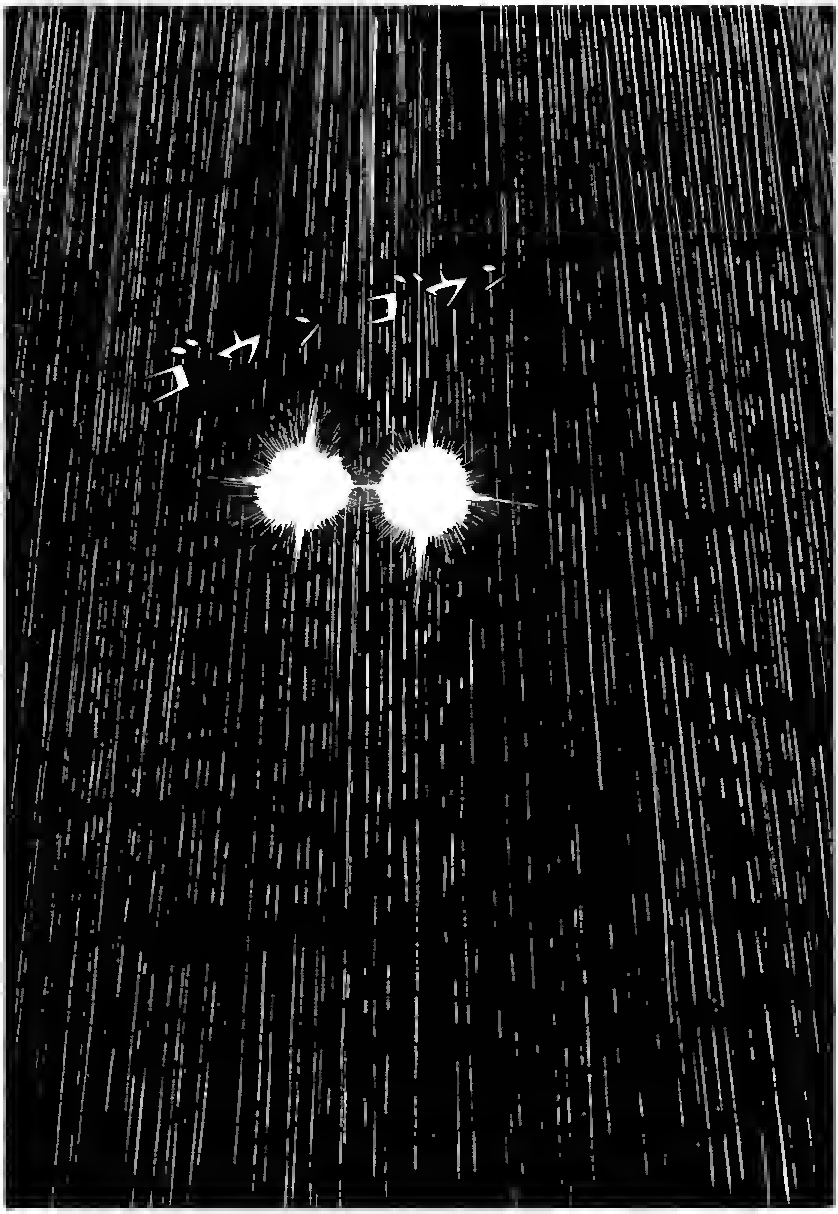
THERE THEY GO. THEY LOOKED PRETTY INTRIGUED.
SO...
WHAT WERE YOU TWO TALKING ABOUT?
RYU?
IF MAN, BACK IN THE BEGINNING...
LEARNED TO USE HIS SPIRIT INSTEAD OF HIS HANDS...
AND HAD EVOLVED UNDER THOSE CONDITIONS, WHERE WOULD WE BE RIGHT NOW?


CREATING TOOLS WITH OUR HANDS...
HAS LEFT US SLAVES TO OUR OWN INVENTIONS.
AND PERHAPS THAT WILL LAST FOREVER...
SO, MAY-BE...
IF WE WANT TO CREATE A BRIGHTER FUTURE...
MAYBE WE NEED TO DEVELOP OUR SOULS, OUR HEARTS.


MAYBE WE NEED TO LEARN TO COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER, HEART TO HEART.
HUH?

WHO IS...?
HUFF HUFF HUFF

WHAT THE...?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AH! A... A PLANE!
THAT WAS WHAT I SAW!
I WAS RIGHT!

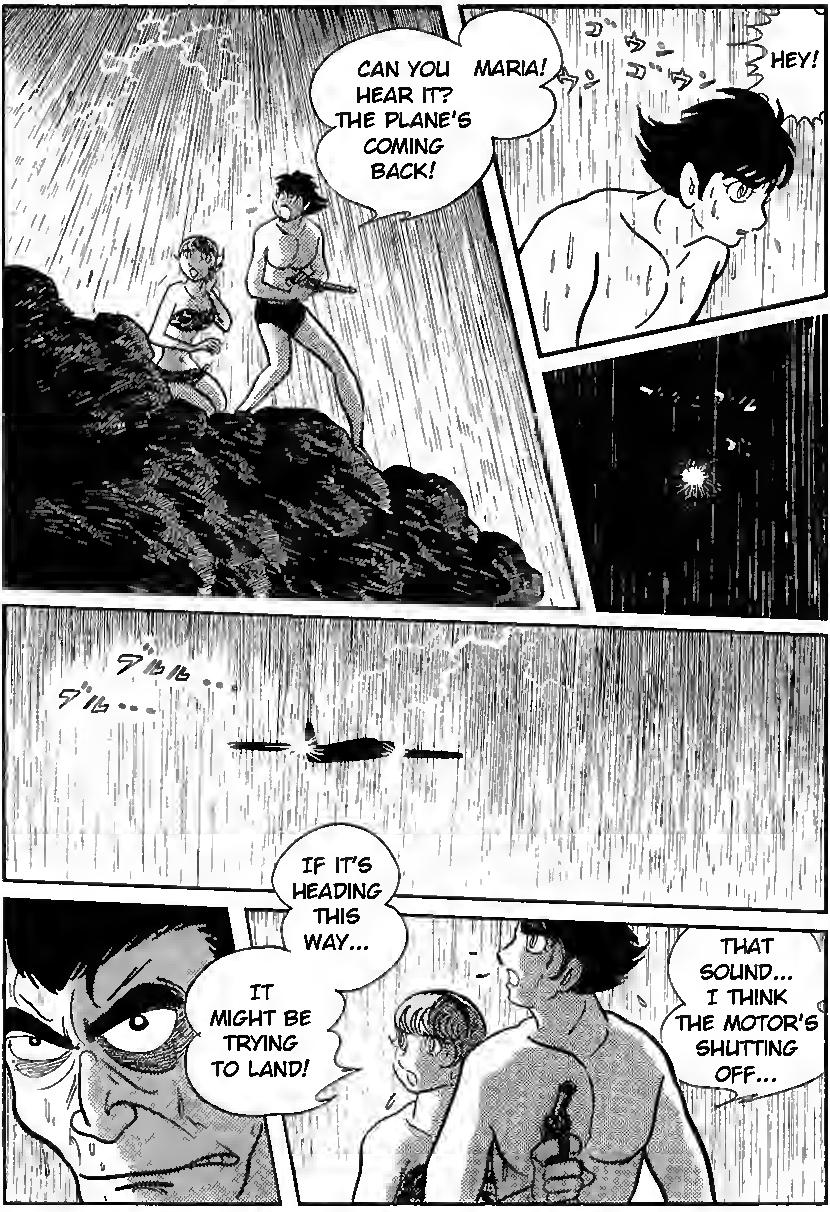
WHO IS...
HUH?
WHO IS THAT?
RYU! LOOK OVER THERE!
MARIA, LOOK!
LOOK AT THAT LIGHT!
I'LL SLICE YOU GOOD!
HUFF...
DAMN... RED-HEADS...
YEAH! I'LL KILL YOU ALL!

WHO IS THAT?
NO CLUE...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM. LET'S LEAVE HIM ALONE.
COME ON!
WE GOTTA FOLLOW THAT PLANE...
BEFORE IT GETS AWAY!

WE CAN'T LET IT GO!
HEY! WAIT!
COME BACK!
DON'T JUST LEAVE!
HMPH... TRYING TO RUN AWAY?
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE ME!
DIRTY COW-ARD!
THAT GUY'S FOLLOW-ING US!
HUH?

NOT THIS TIME!
TRYING TO CONFUSE ME... WITH YOUR DAMNED BARBARIAN SORCERY?
STOP!
NOT ANO-THER STEP!

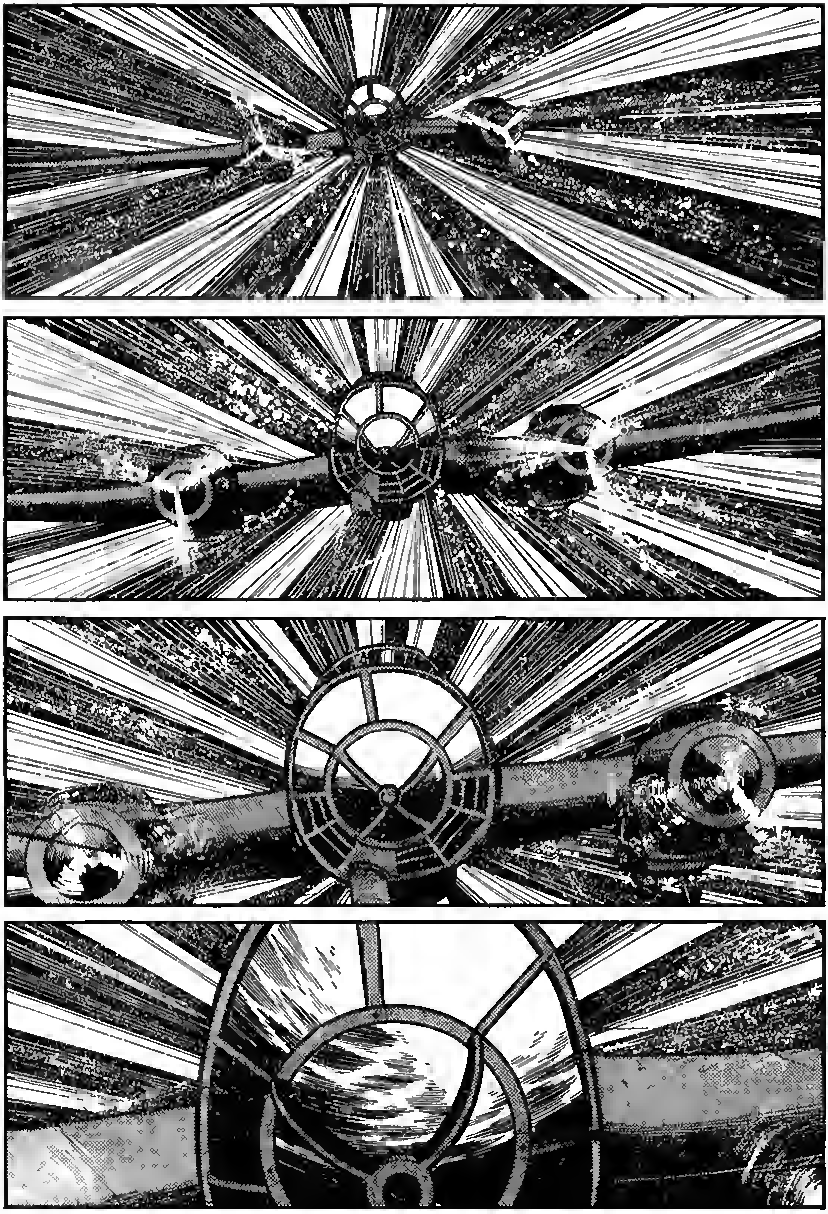
ANOTHER FOOT AND I WILL SHOOT!
FEH... MORE BAR-BARIAN TRICKS.

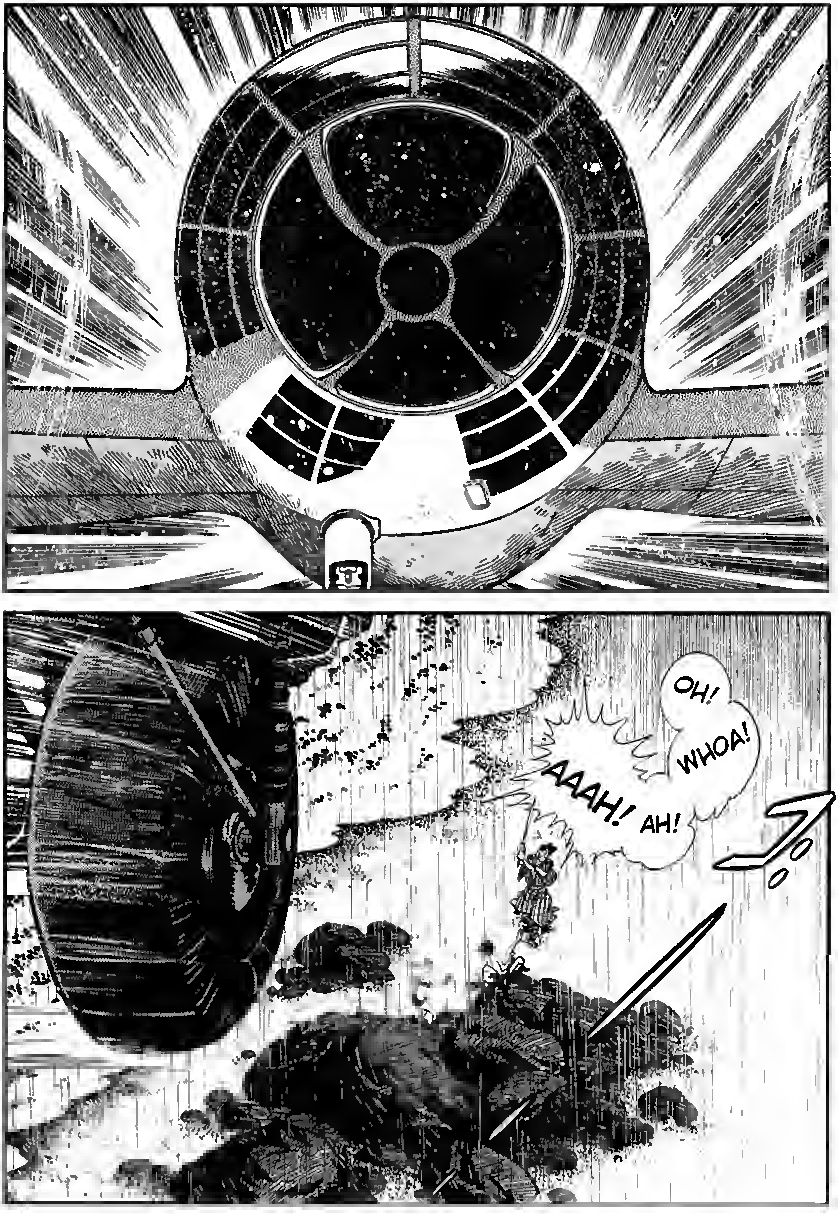

MARIA!
CAN YOU HEAR IT? THE PLANE'S COMING BACK!
HEY!
IF IT'S HEADING THIS WAY...
IT MIGHT BE TRYING TO LAND!
THAT SOUND... I THINK THE MOTOR'S SHUTTING OFF...

HYAA!

GET BACK, MARIA!
RYU!
AAH?
MY GOD...
HE... JUST PULLED IT OUT!
SOR-CER-OUS TRASH!
YAAAH!

DIE!
RYU!
WHAT!?




OH!
WHOA!
AAAH!
AH!

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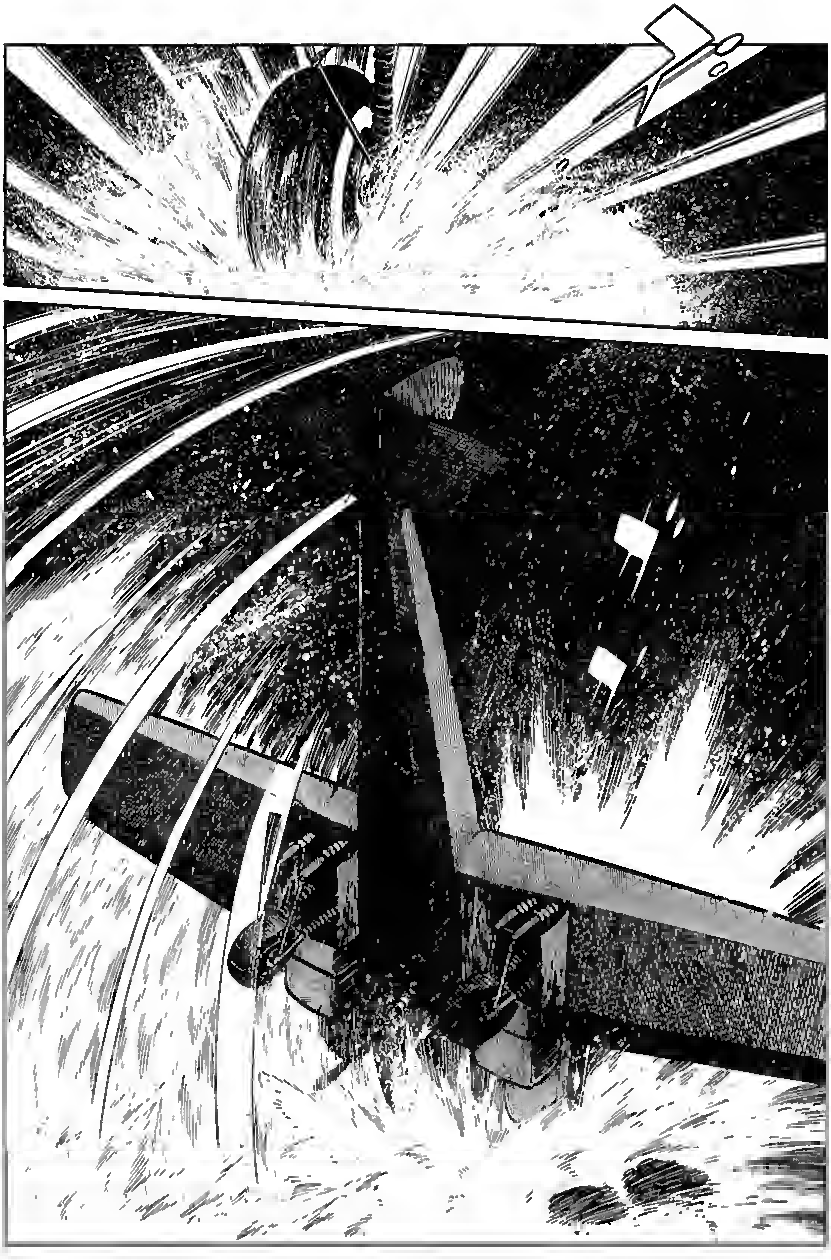
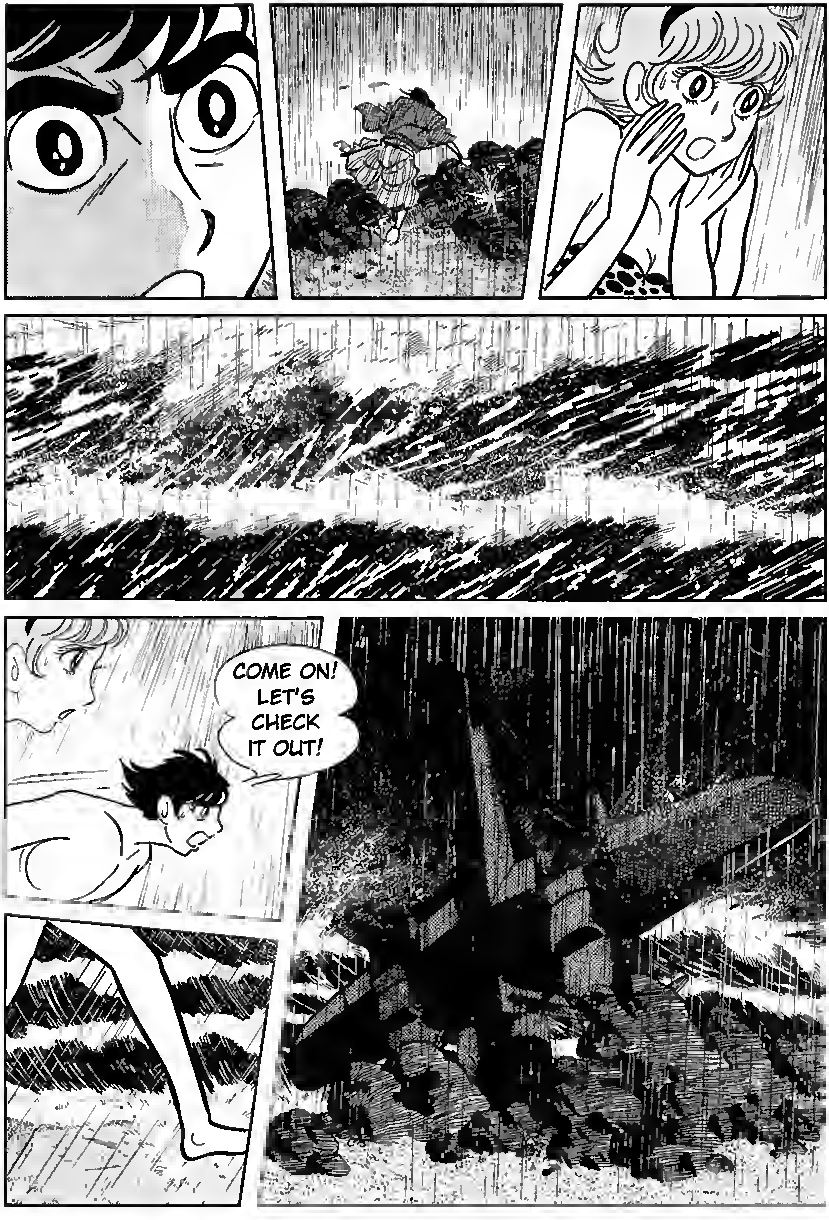
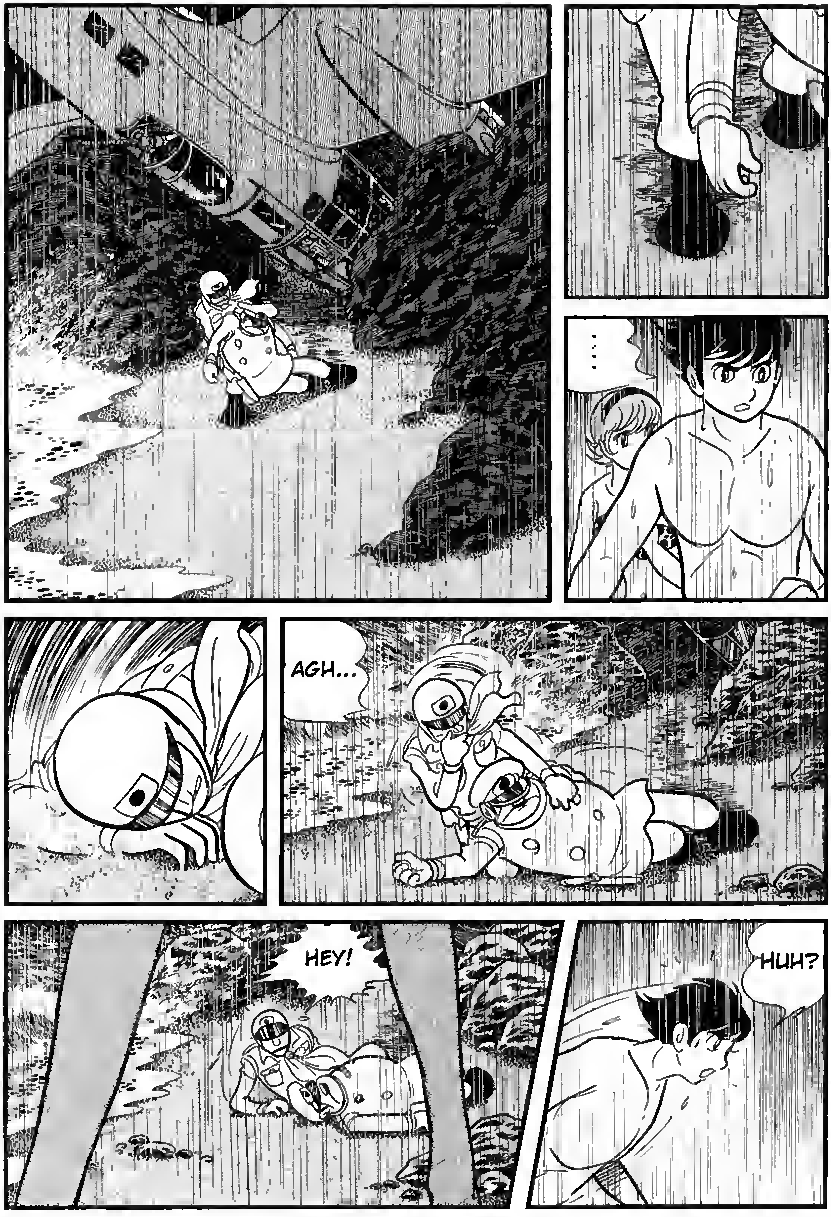
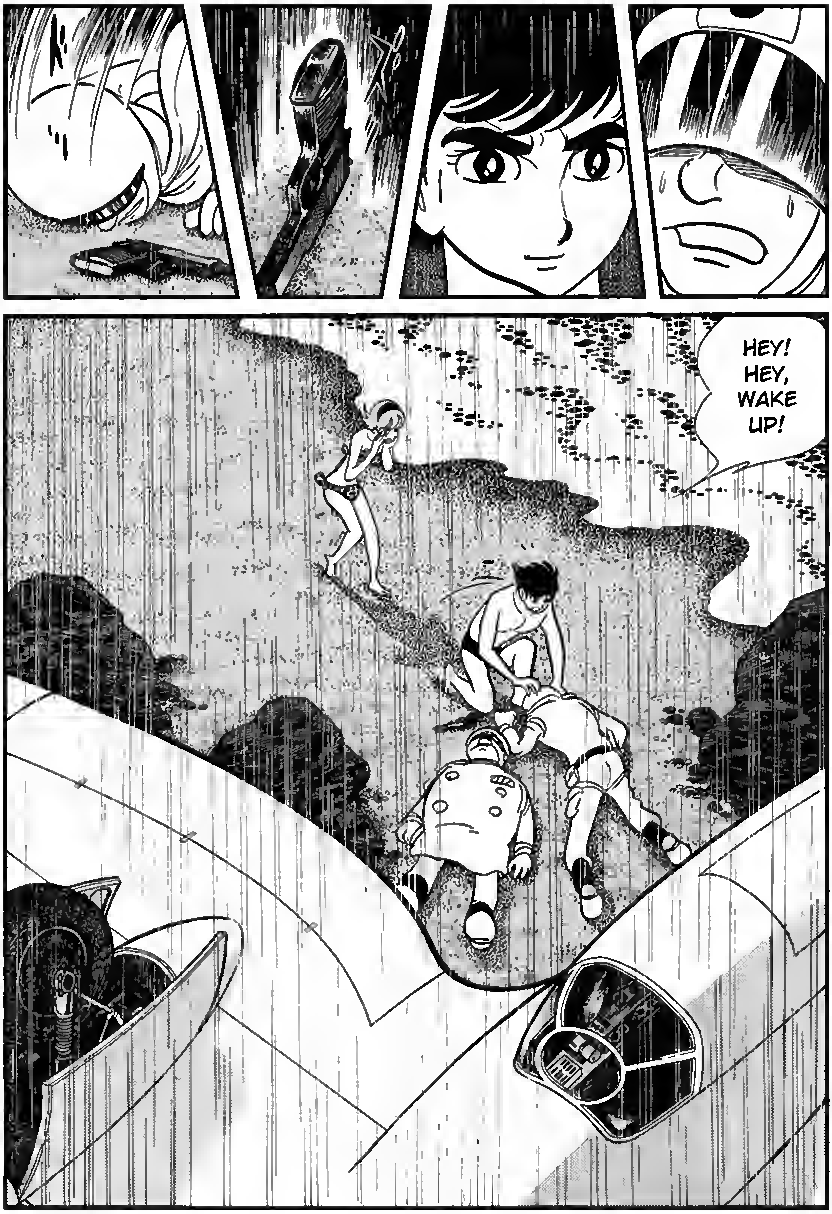
ゴ
!HAAAA

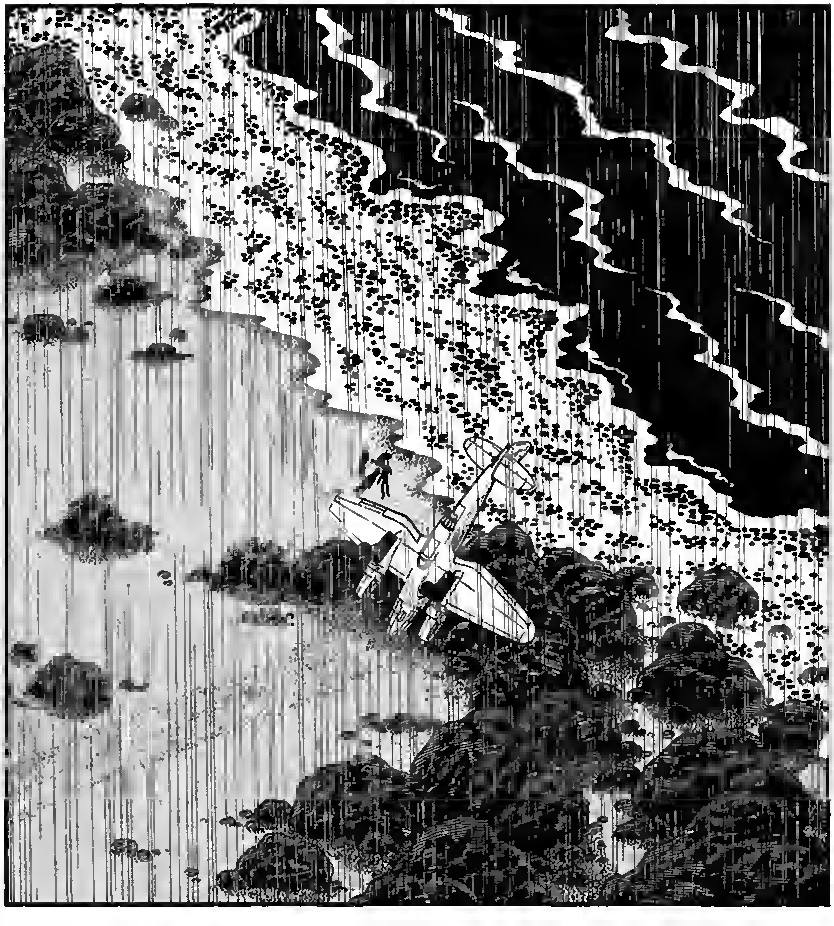


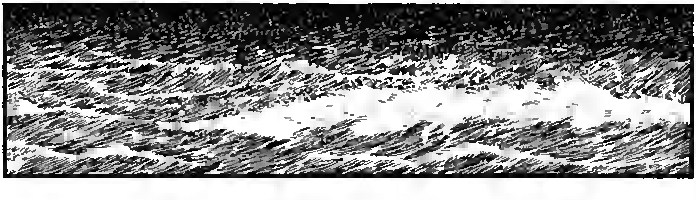

COME ON! LET'S CHECK IT OUT!

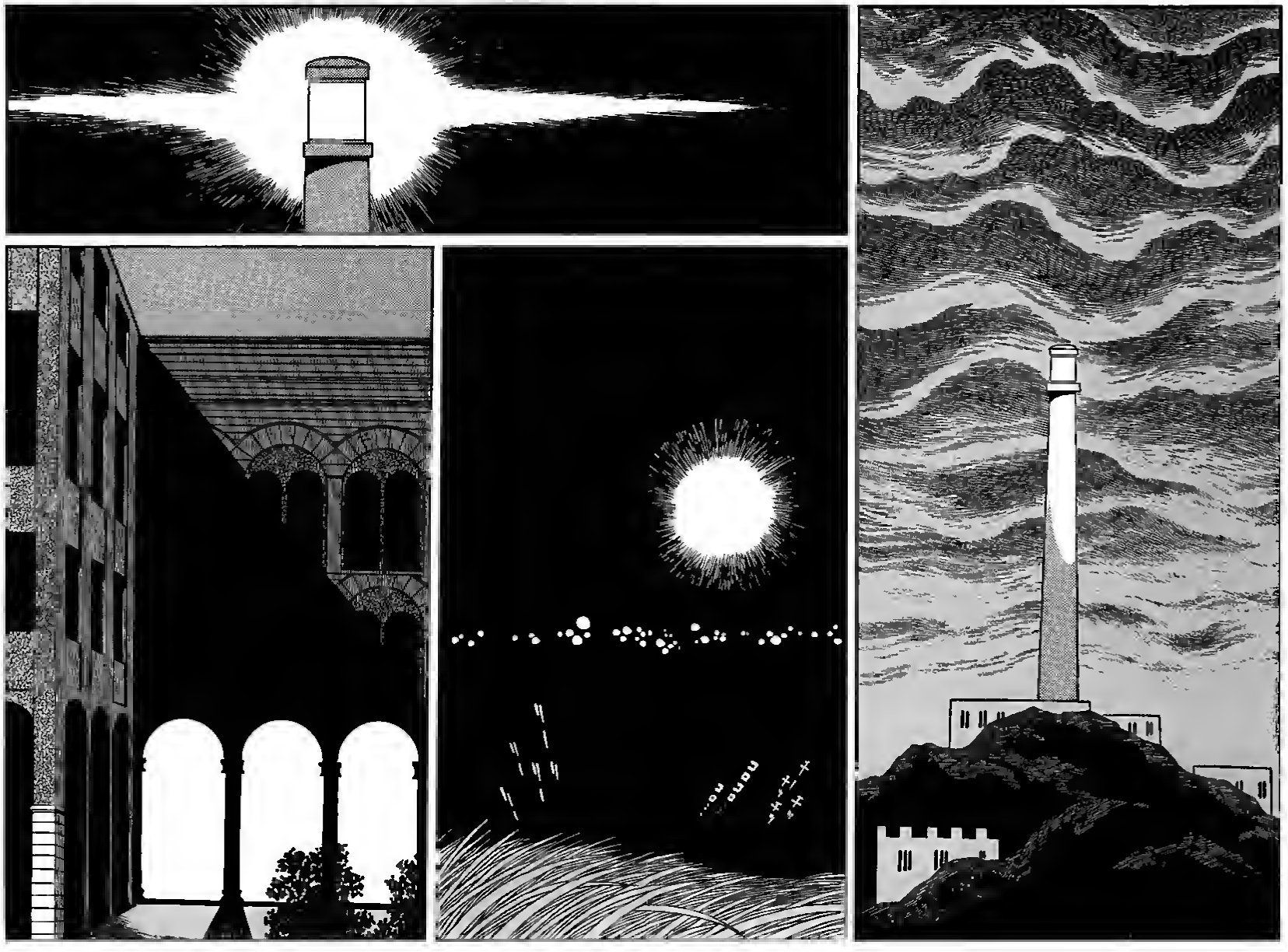

AGH...
HEY!
HUH?

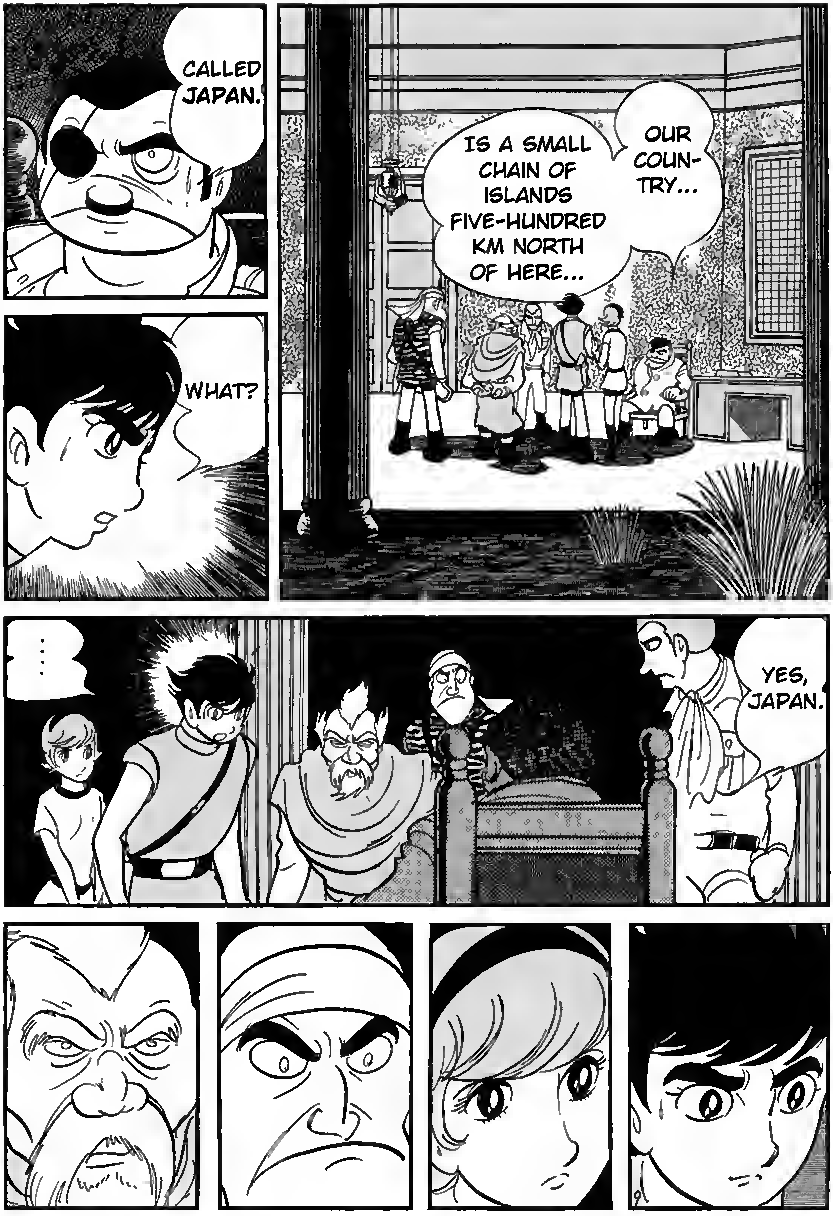
WE'RE HERE TO...
STOP!
WE DON'T MEAN YOU ANY HARM!
WHO ARE YOU?
I WAS SAYING, WERE HERE TO HELP.

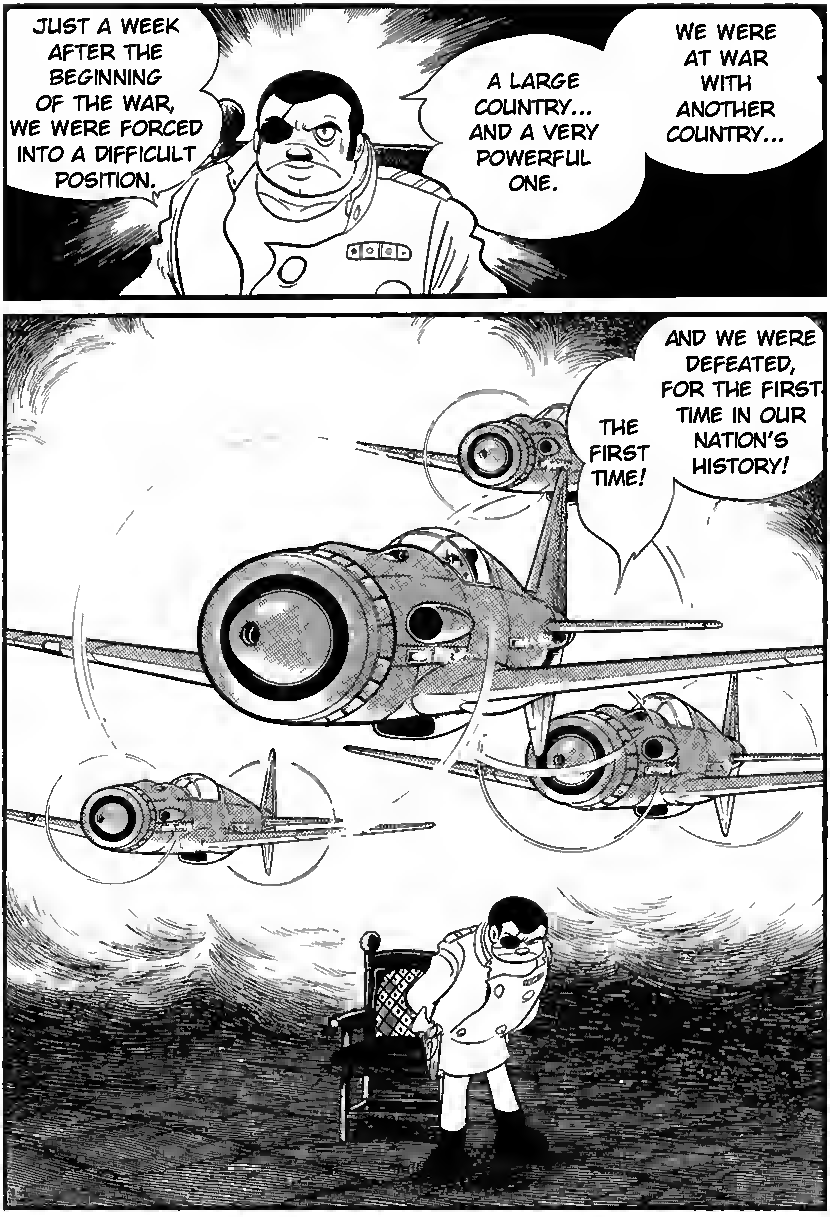

HEY! HEY, WAKE UP!

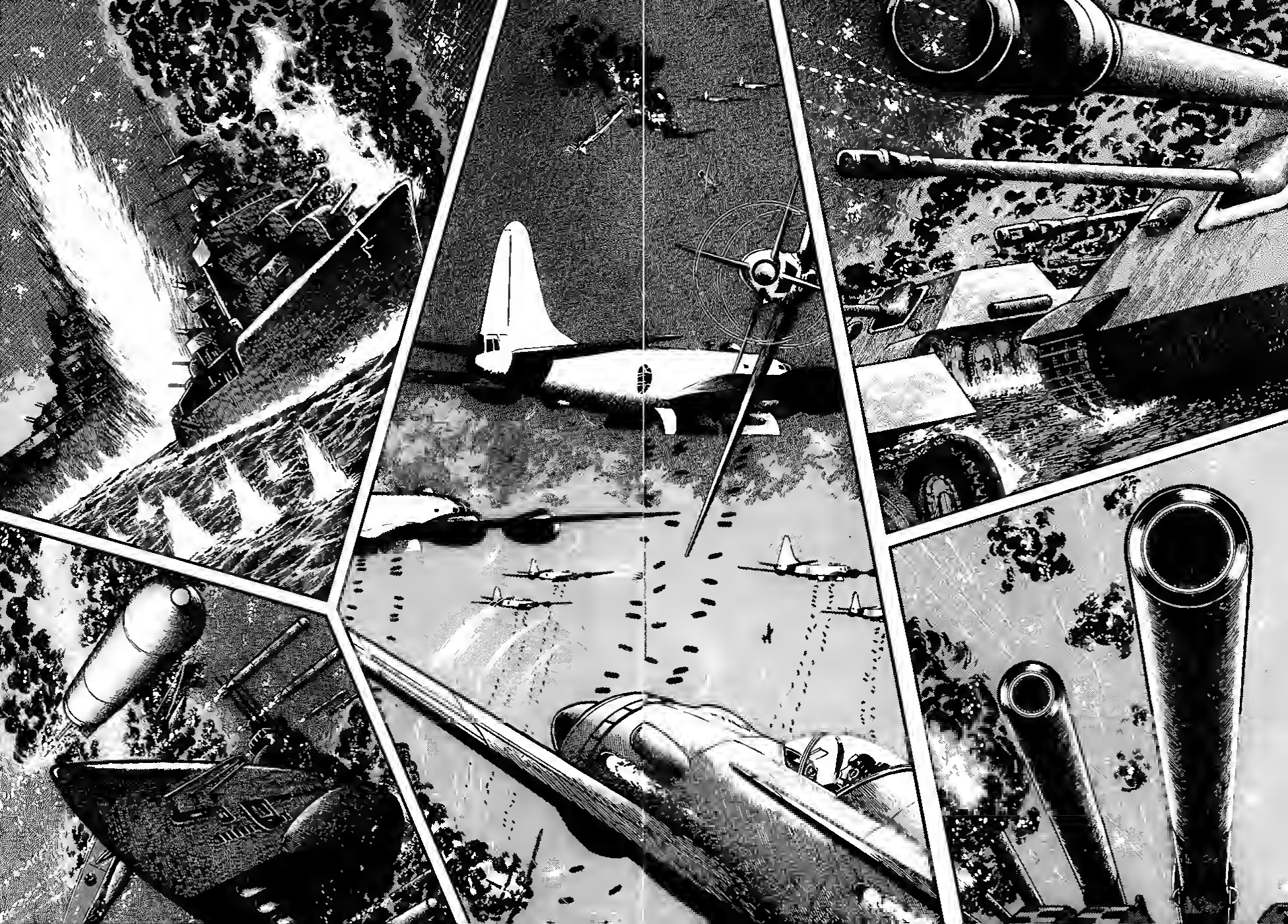


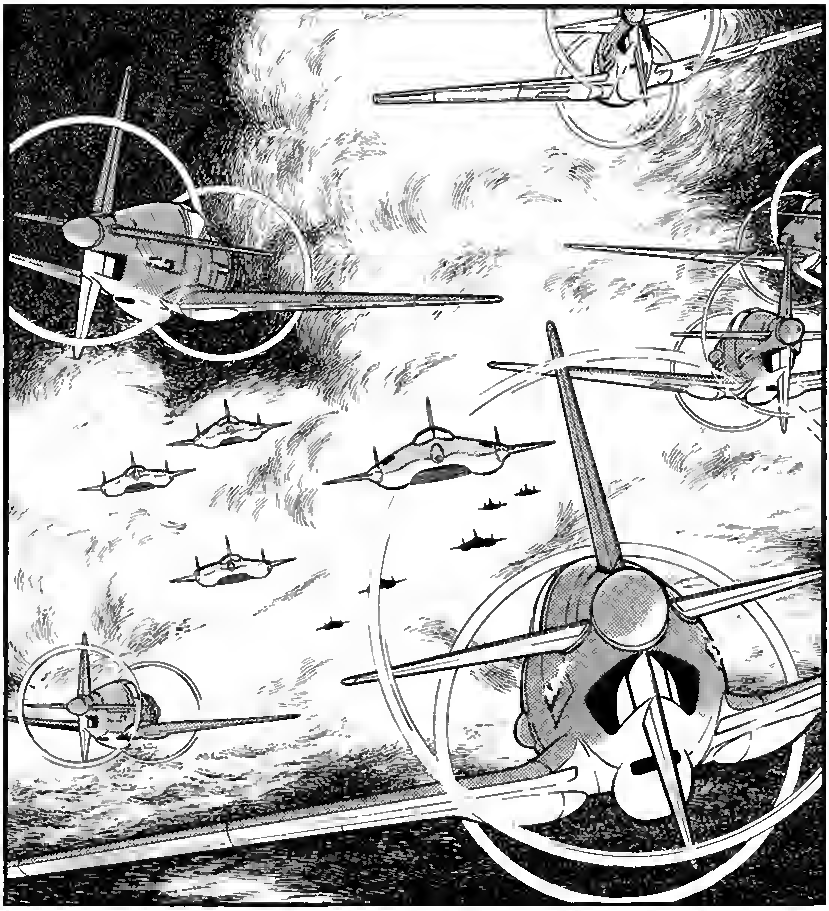


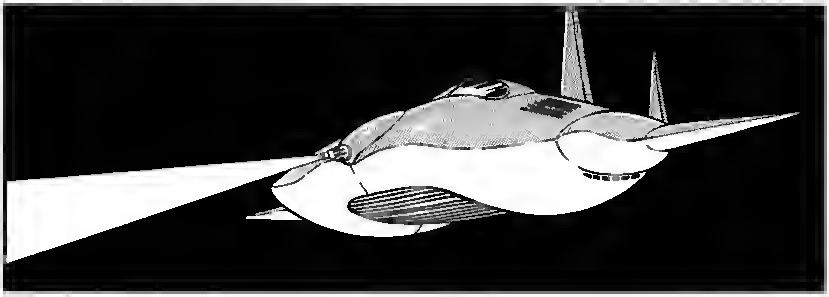


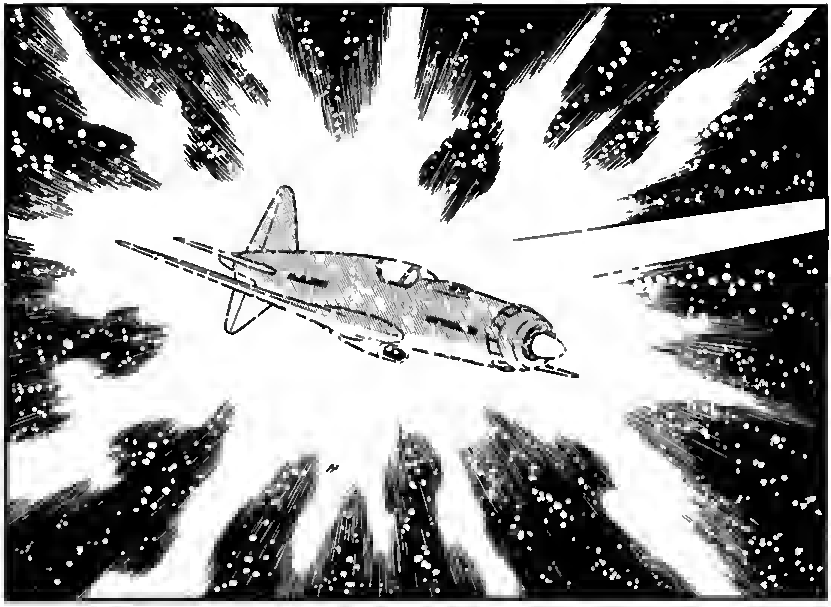

CALLED JAPAN.
WHAT?
OUR COUN-TRY...
IS A SMALL CHAIN OF ISLANDS FIVE-HUNDRED KM NORTH OF HERE...
YES, JAPAN.
....

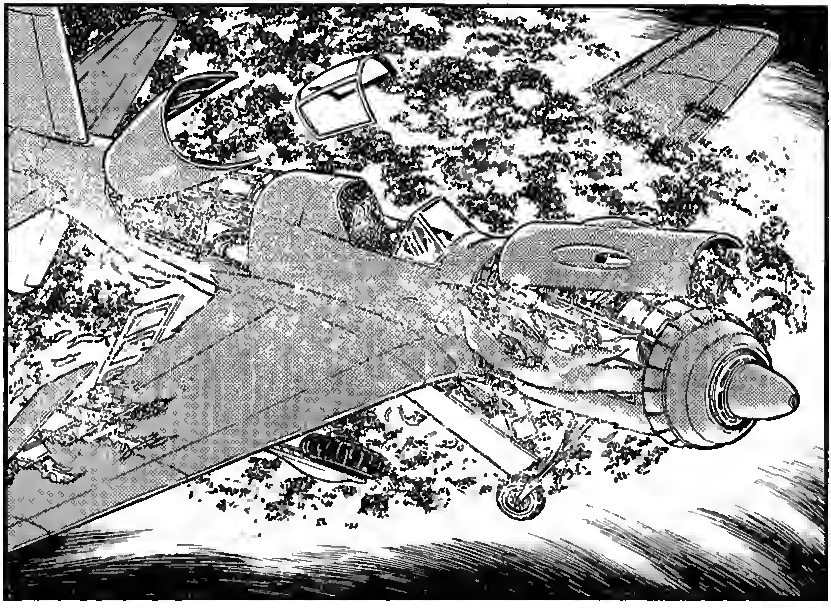

JUST A WEEK AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR, WE WERE FORCED INTO A DIFFICULT POSITION.
A LARGE COUNTRY... AND A VERY POWERFUL ONE.
WE WERE AT WAR WITH ANOTHER COUNTRY...
THE FIRST TIME!
AND WE WERE DEFEATED, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY!

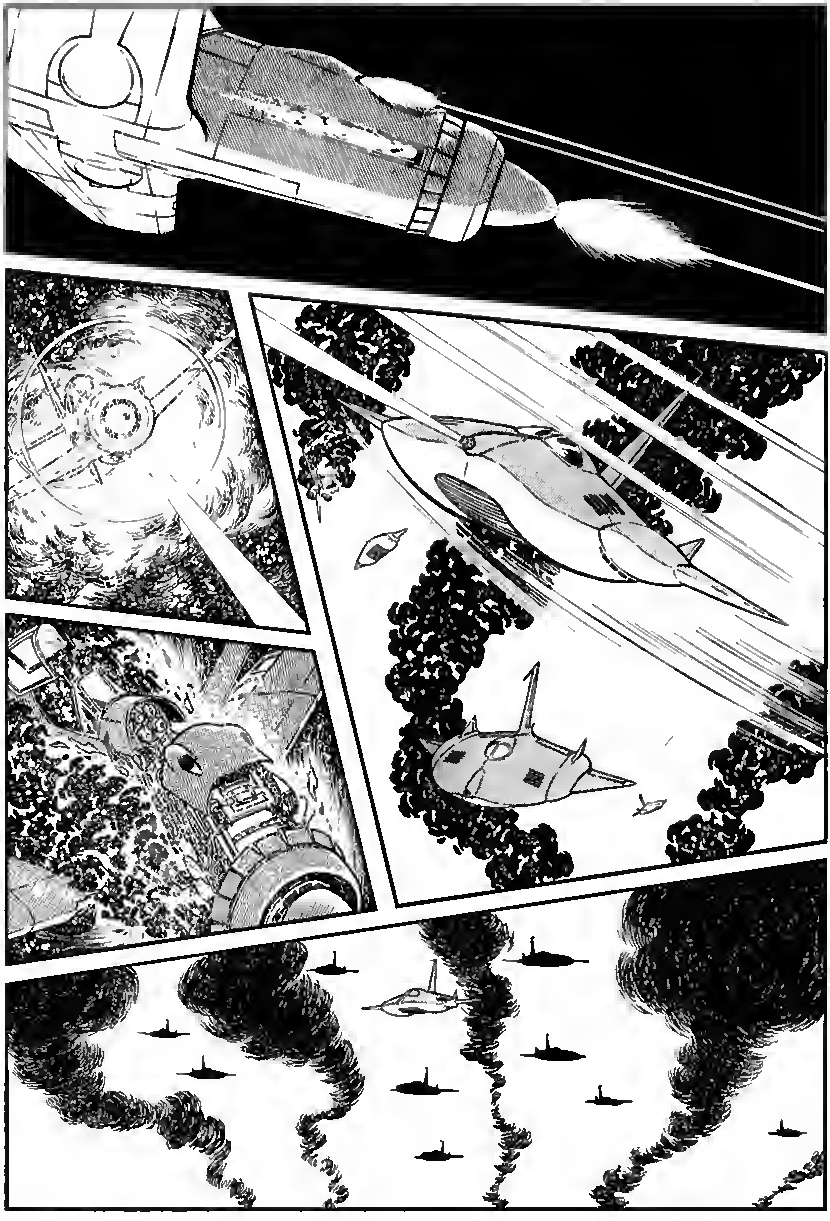


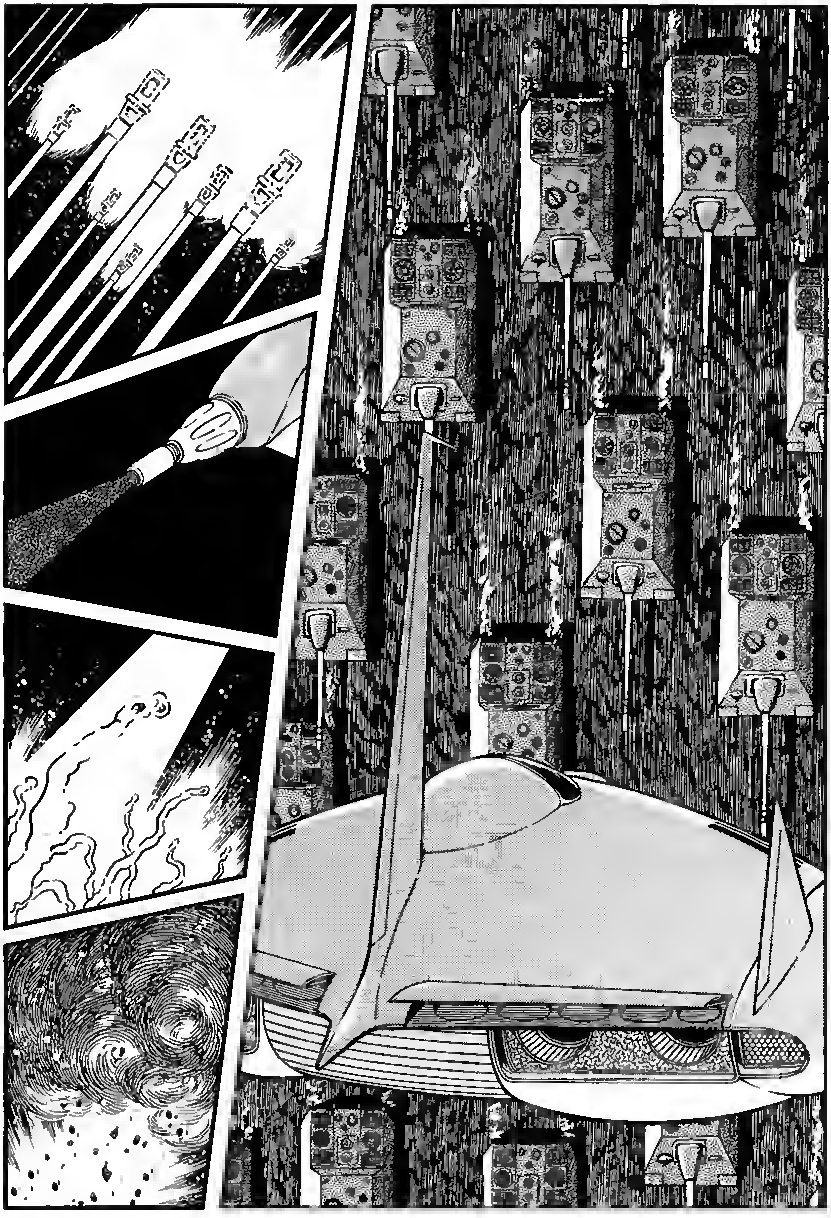






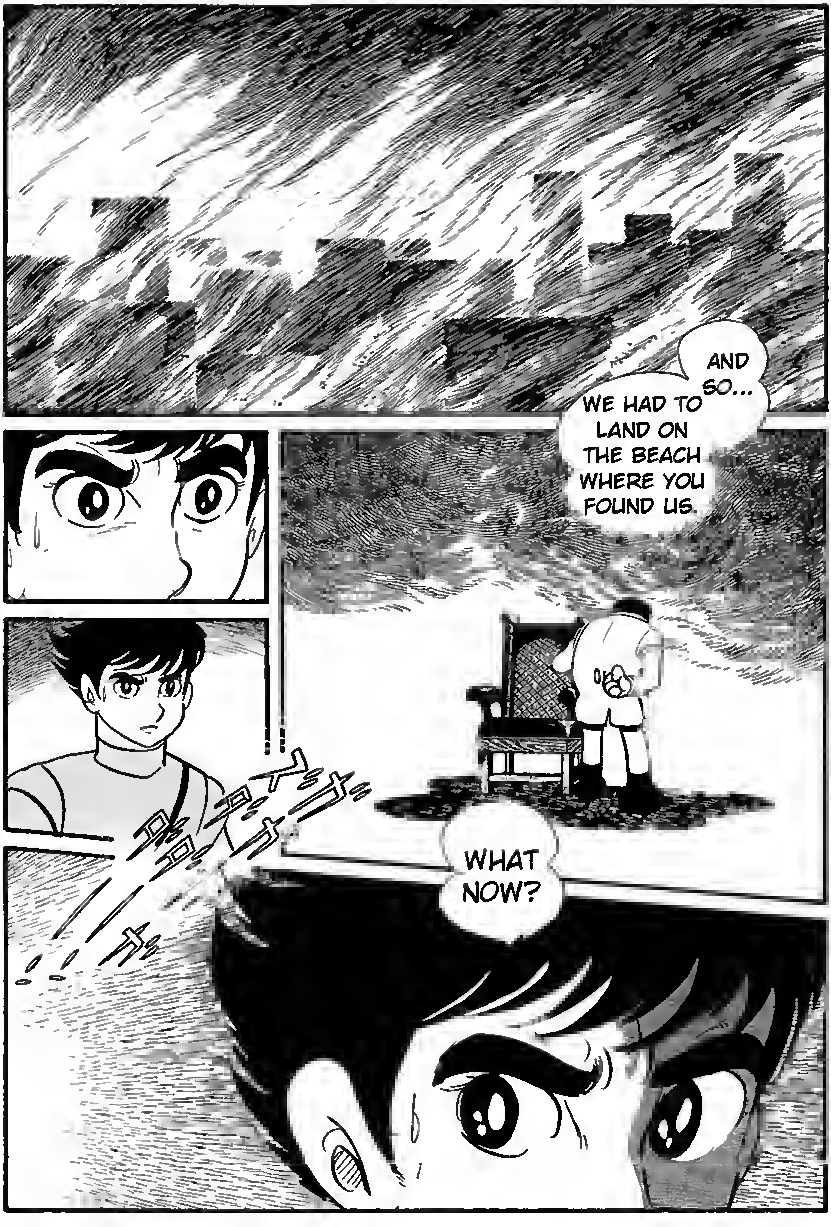


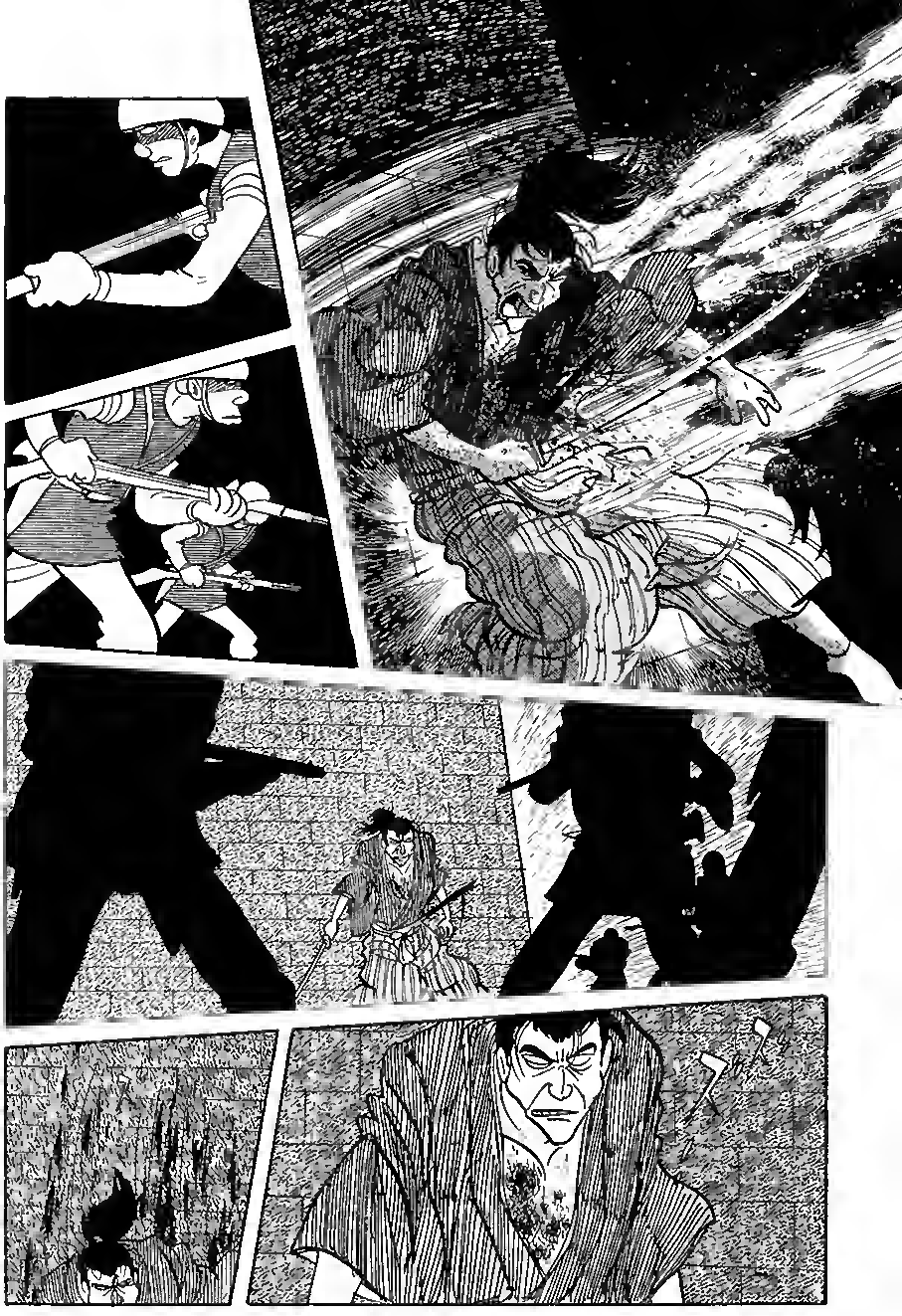




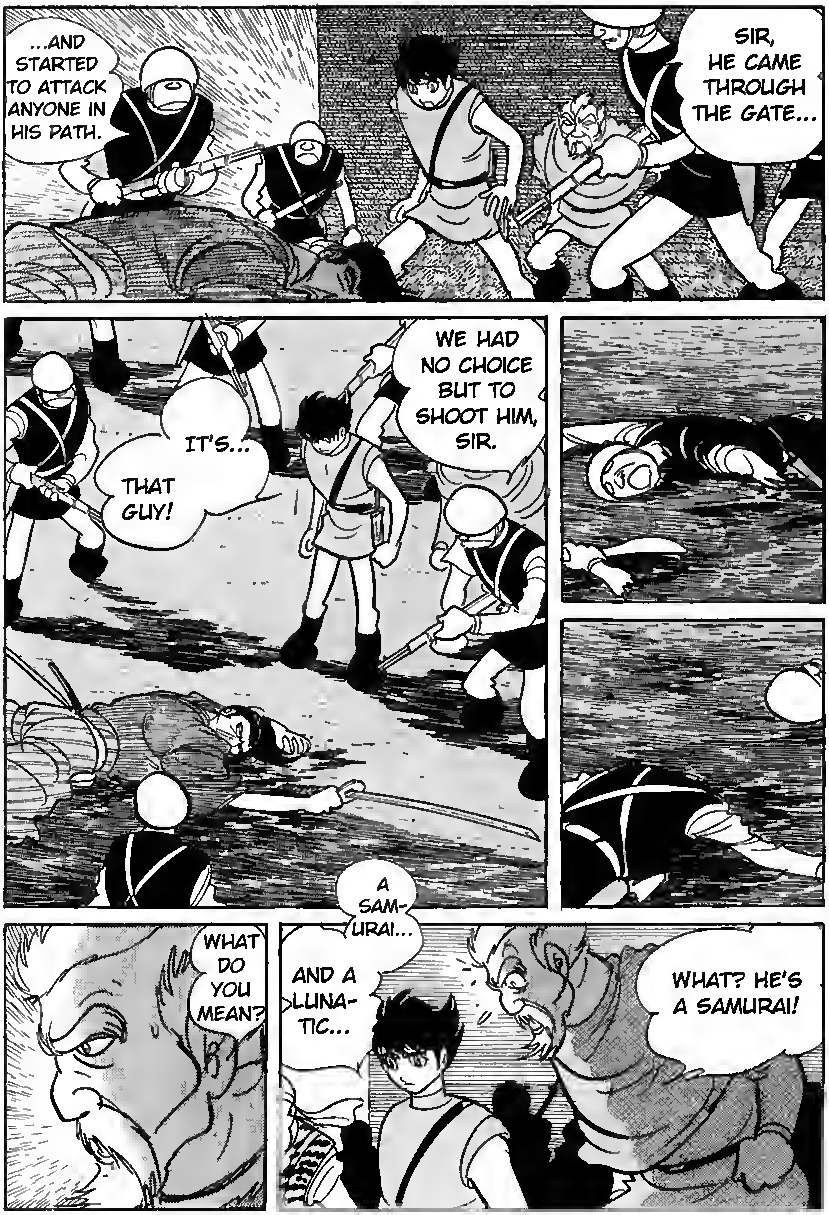
WE WERE PURELY OUT-MATCHED.

WE TRIED TO MAKE A TACTICAL RETREAT...
USING ONE OF THE FEW AIRCRAFT WE HAD LEFT...
BUT THEN OUR PLANE'S ENGINES BROKE DOWN...


AND SO...
WE HAD TO LAND ON THE BEACH WHERE YOU FOUND US.
WHAT NOW?



WHAT HAPP-ENED?
WHAT IN THE...?


...AND STARTED TO ATTACK ANYONE IN HIS PATH.
SIR, HE CAME THROUGH THE GATE...
WE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO SHOOT HIM, SIR.
IT'S... THAT GUY!
A SAM-URAI...
AND A LUNA-TIC...
WHAT? HE'S A SAMURAI!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

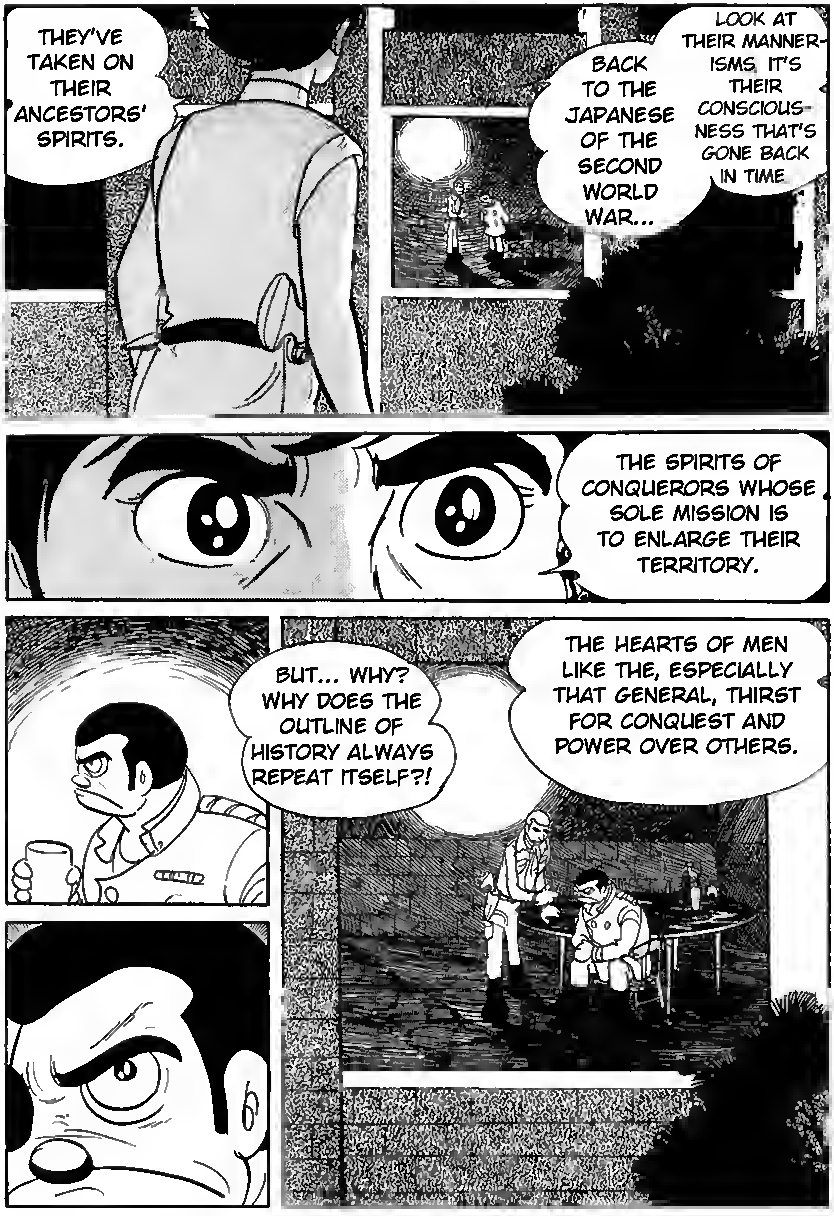
I SAW HIM ON THE BEACH.
I TRIED TO READ HIS THOUGHTS...
BUT HE WAS JUST CONFUSED.
IT TOOK A WHILE, BUT WHEN I TRIED TO MAKE SENSE OF HIS THOUGHTS, I MANAGED TO COME UP WITH A FEW THINGS.
HIS NAME WAS KOHEI MABUCHI...
A FIERCE OPPONENT OF JAPAN'S REFORMATION IN THE 19TH CENTURY.
AS WELL...
HE WAS THE PAWN OF A NATIONALIST FAR MORE CUNNING THAN HE HIMSELF...
WHO VOLUNTARILY BECAME AN ASSASSIN AGAINST THE FOREIGNERS.

HE DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT POLITICS.
ALL HE WANTED TO DO WAS KILL.
I DON'T THINK A MAN LIKE HIM COULD FIND ANY OTHER JOB IN THAT ERA.
AND BEING AN ULTRA-NATIONALIST HIRED SWORD LIKE THAT WAS JUST THE EXCUSE HE NEEDED.

AND WHEN DID THAT END?
FOR A LONG TIME, JAPAN HAD PROHIBITED FOREIGNERS FROM RESIDING WITHIN ITS TERRITORY AND CLOSED ITS BORDERS.
THE MIDDLE OF THE 19TH CENTURY.
AND ENDING UP HERE...
CROSSING THROUGH SPACE AND TIME...
THIS MAN... HE MUST HAVE FALLEN THROUGH A WARP.
ALL BECAUSE OF THE DAMAGE DONE BY THAT CATASTROPHE...
PERHAPS HE WAS ALREADY SCREWED UP IN HIS OWN TIME. WHO KNOWS?

KOHEI MABUCHI DIDN'T HAVE...
THE FORTITUDE HE NEEDED TO RESIST THE SHOCK OF TRAVELING THROUGH TIME.

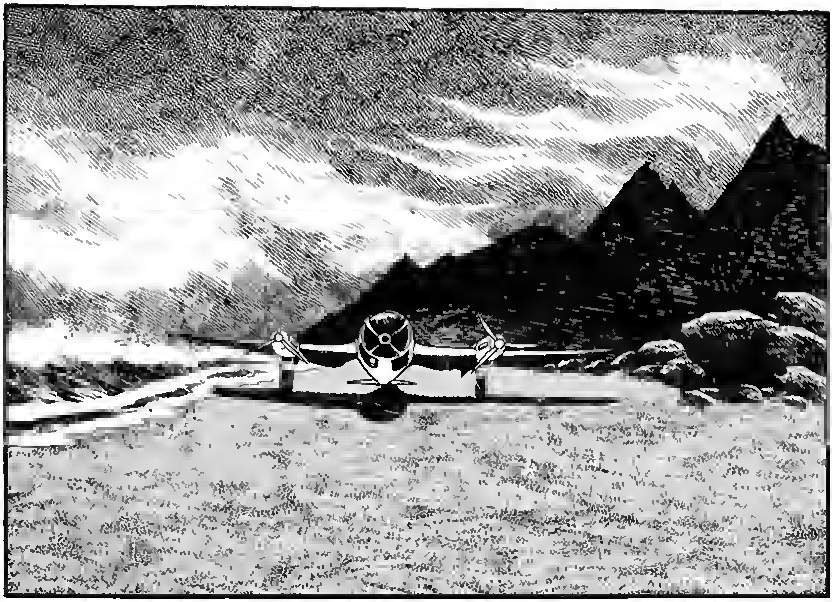
SO MUST WE NOW REVISE OUR HISTORY?
HUH?
NO.
THEY DIDN'T TIME TRAVEL.
NOT THEM.
WHAT OF THOSE TWO SOLDIERS WHO FELL FROM THE SKY?
THEY'RE DESCEND-ANTS OF THE JAPANESE THAT SURVIVED THE WAR.
BUT THAT'S NOT THE CASE.
I THOUGHT THEY DID TOO, AT FIRST...


THEY'VE TAKEN ON THEIR ANCESTORS' SPIRITS.
LOOK AT THEIR MANNERISMS. IT'S THEIR CONSCIOUSNESS THAT'S GONE BACK IN TIME.
BACK TO THE JAPANESE OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR...
THE SPIRITS OF CONQUERORS WHOSE SOLE MISSION IS TO ENLARGE THEIR TERRITORY.
BUT... WHY? WHY DOES THE OUTLINE OF HISTORY ALWAYS REPEAT ITSELF?!
THE HEARTS OF MEN LIKE THE, ESPECIALLY THAT GENERAL, THIRST FOR CONQUEST AND POWER OVER OTHERS.

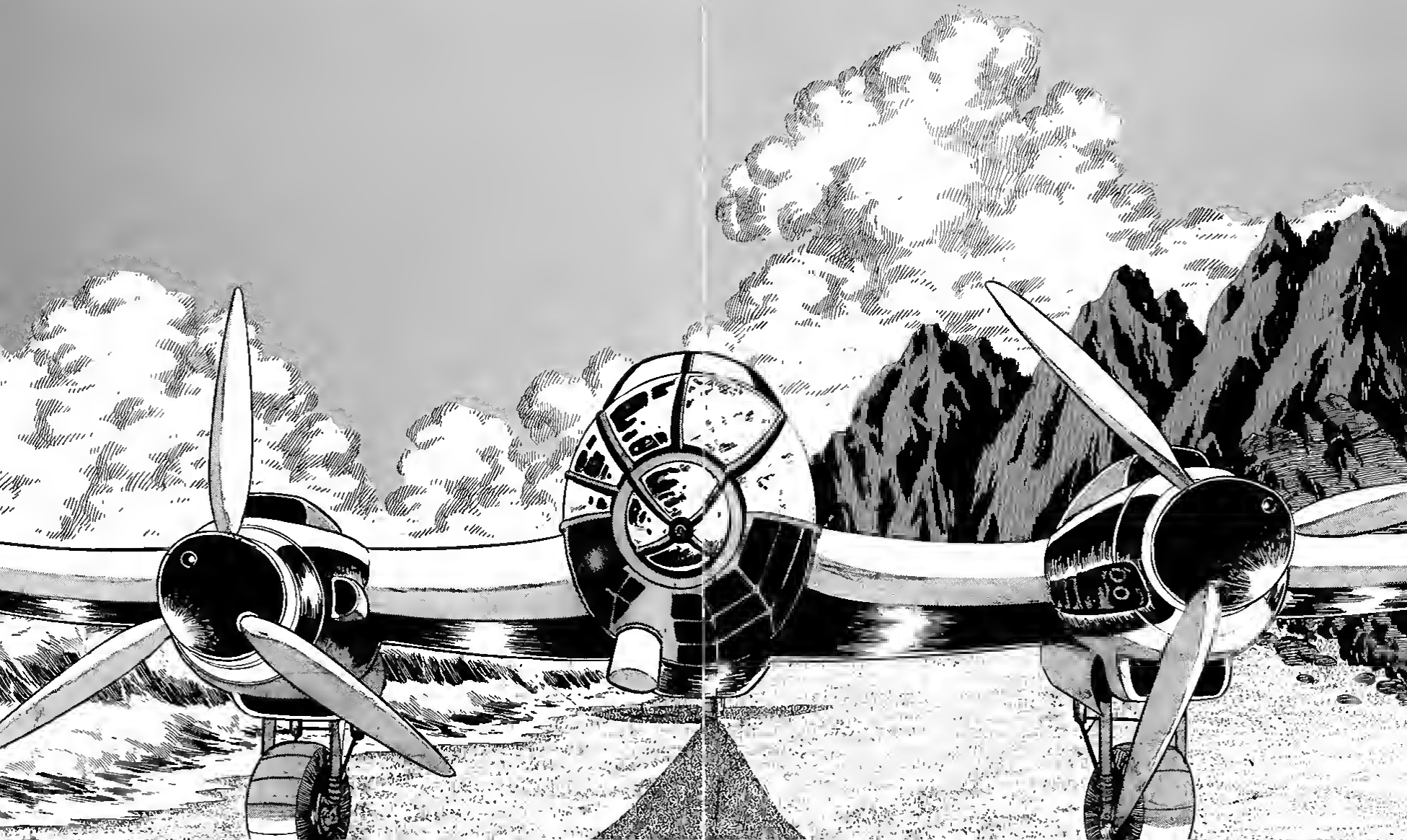
THE ARMY OF A SMALL ISLAND CHAIN CALLED JAPAN HOLDS ALL THE POWER IN THE WORLD, AND HE'S ITS COMMANDER.
FOR THAT MAN...
NON-SENSE, RYU.
NOT ONLY HIM, ALL GENERALS ARE LIKE THAT.
HE FLED THE MOMENT HE KNEW THE BATTLE WASN'T GOING HIS WAY!
HE'S CRUEL AND COW-ARDLY.

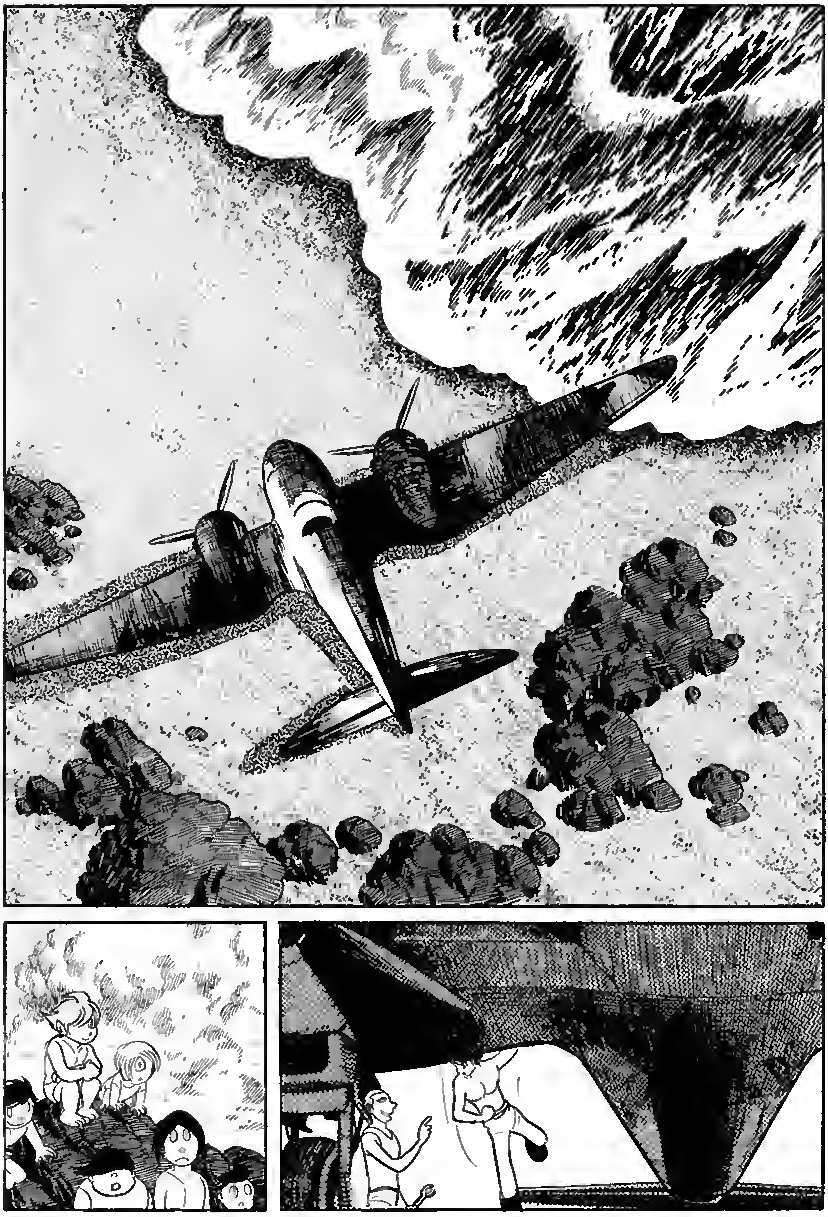
BUT WHAT KIND OF ENEMY COULD FORCE HIM TO RETREAT SO QUICKLY AND CARELESSLY?
THERE LIES THE QUEST-ION!
BUT THAT DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT TO ME.
WHAT I SAW IN THEIR MINDS LOOKED LIKE A MONSTER, OR SOME KIND OF ALIEN.
IT LEFT ME WONDERING, TOO, SO I WENT IN A BIT DEEPER.

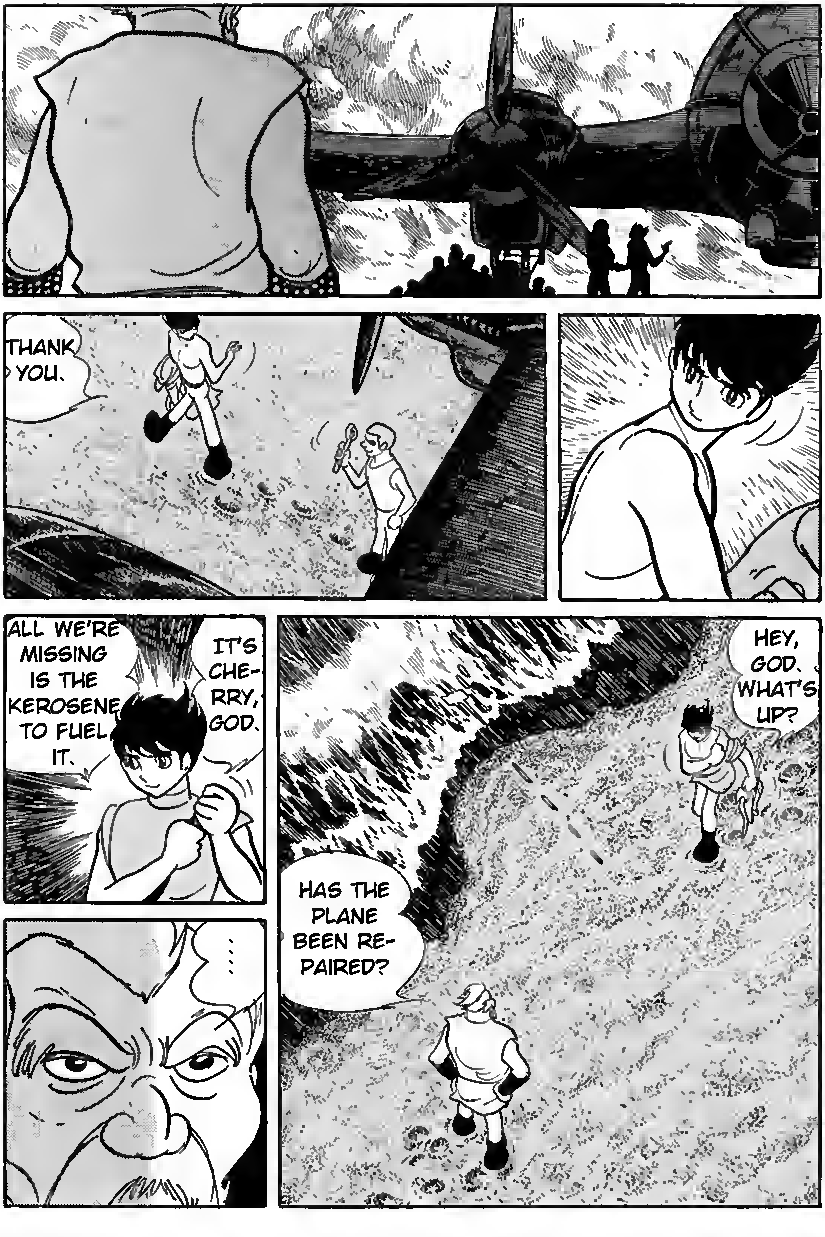
WE MIGHT BE DEALING WITH A HIGHLY-INTELLIGENT MUTANT.
I THINK...

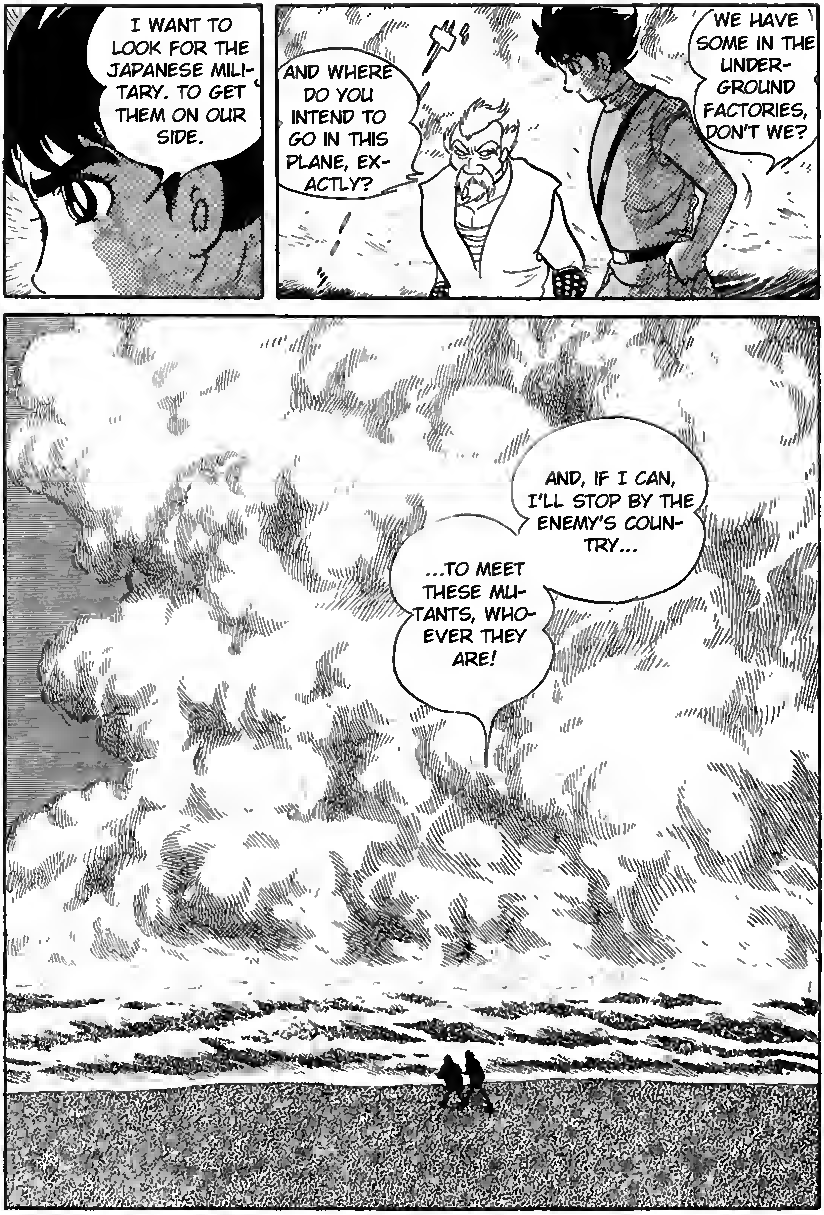


Chapter 26: Prologue to the One who Rules the Future

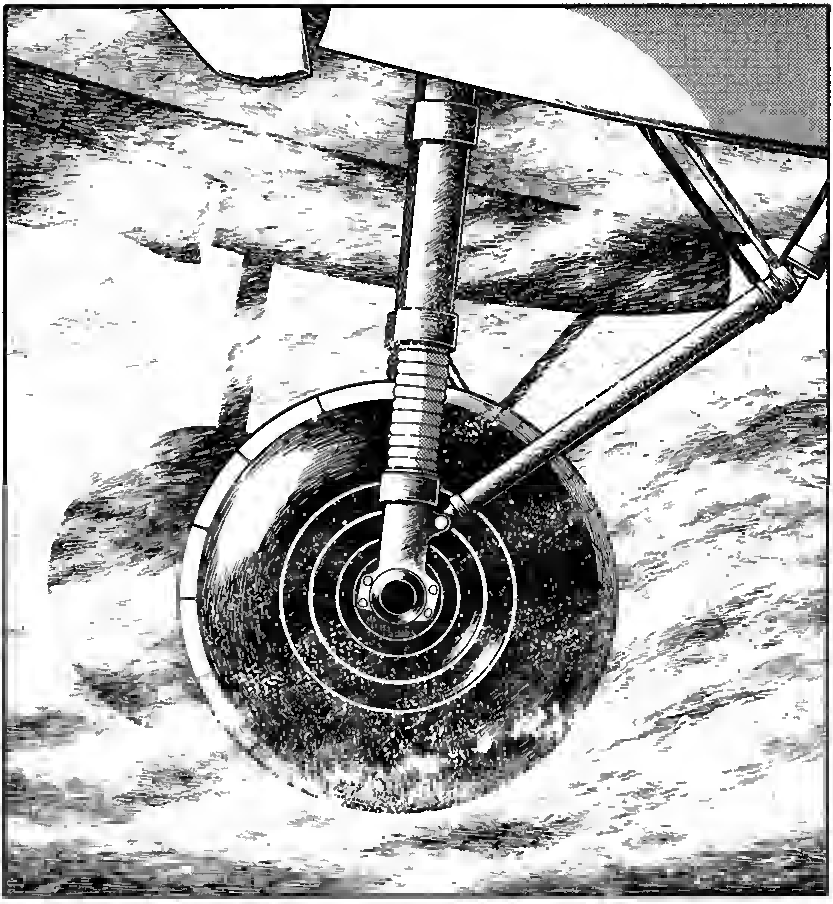


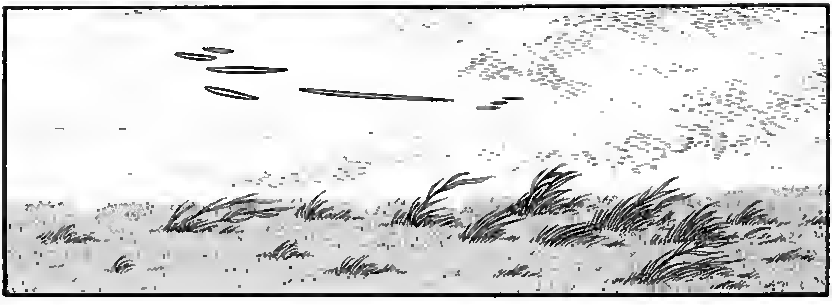


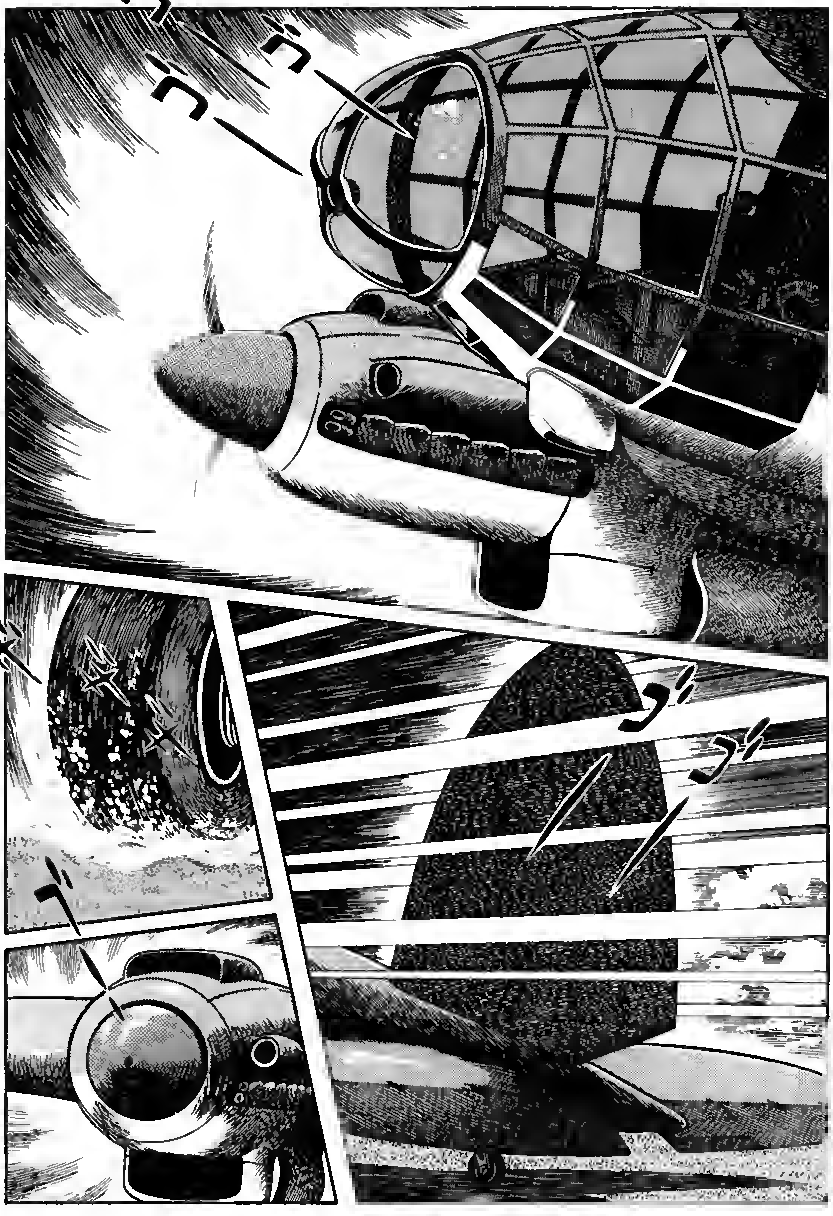

THANK YOU.
ALL WE'RE MISSING IS THE KEROSENE TO FUEL IT.
IT'S CHE-RRY, GOD.
HEY, GOD. WHAT'S UP?
HAS THE PLANE BEEN RE-PAIRED?
....


I WANT TO LOOK FOR THE JAPANESE MILITARY. TO GET THEM ON OUR SIDE.
AND WHERE DO YOU INTEND TO GO IN THIS PLANE, EXACTLY?
WE HAVE SOME IN THE UNDERGROUND FACTORIES, DON'T WE?
AND, IF I CAN, I'LL STOP BY THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY...
...TO MEET THESE MUTANTS, WHOEVER THEY ARE!

⑤未来を支配するもの
CHAPTER 37: THE ONE WHO RULES THE FUTURE



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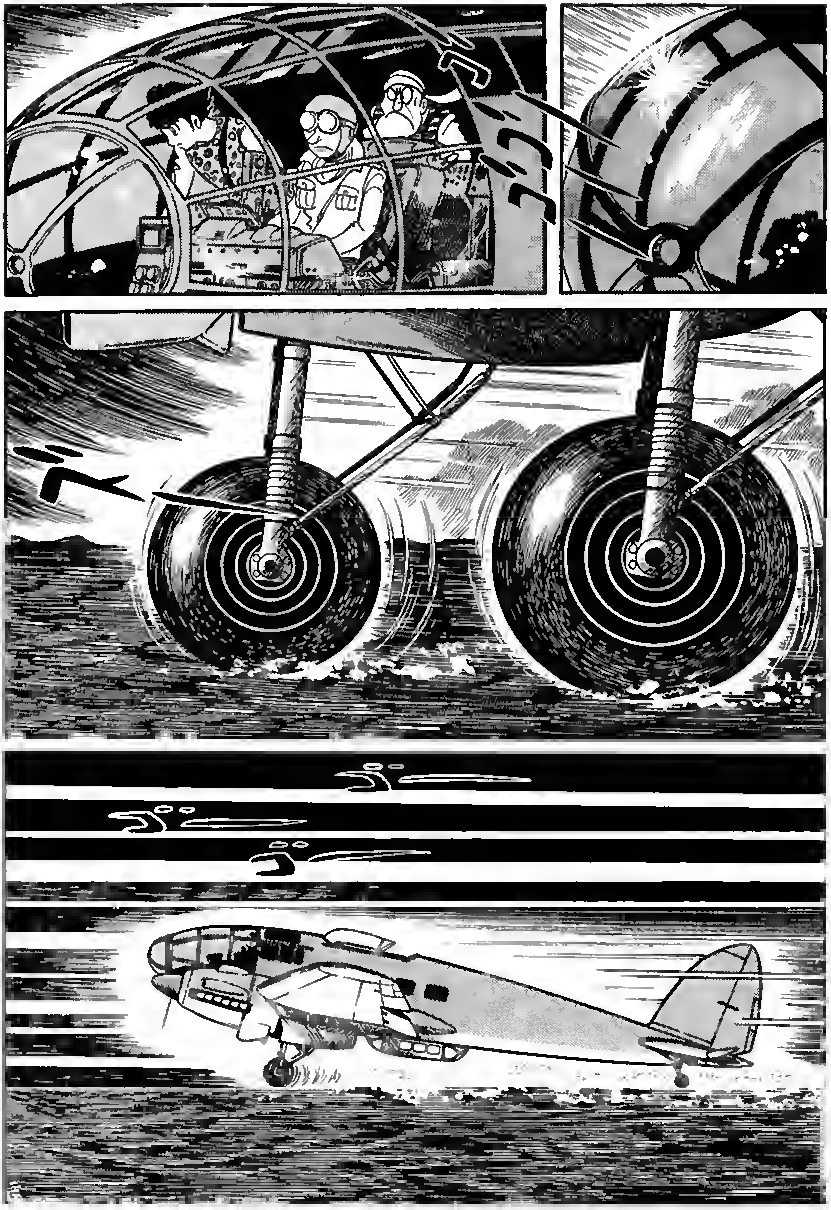
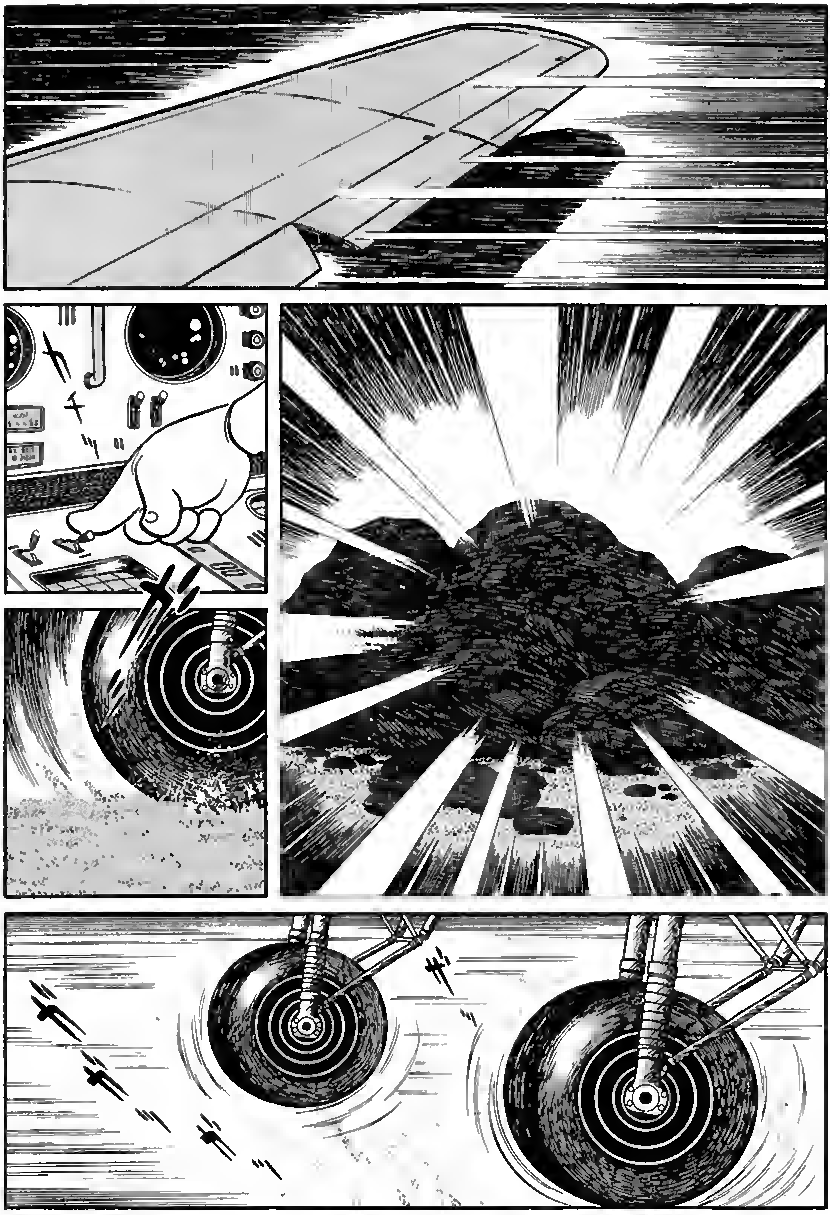
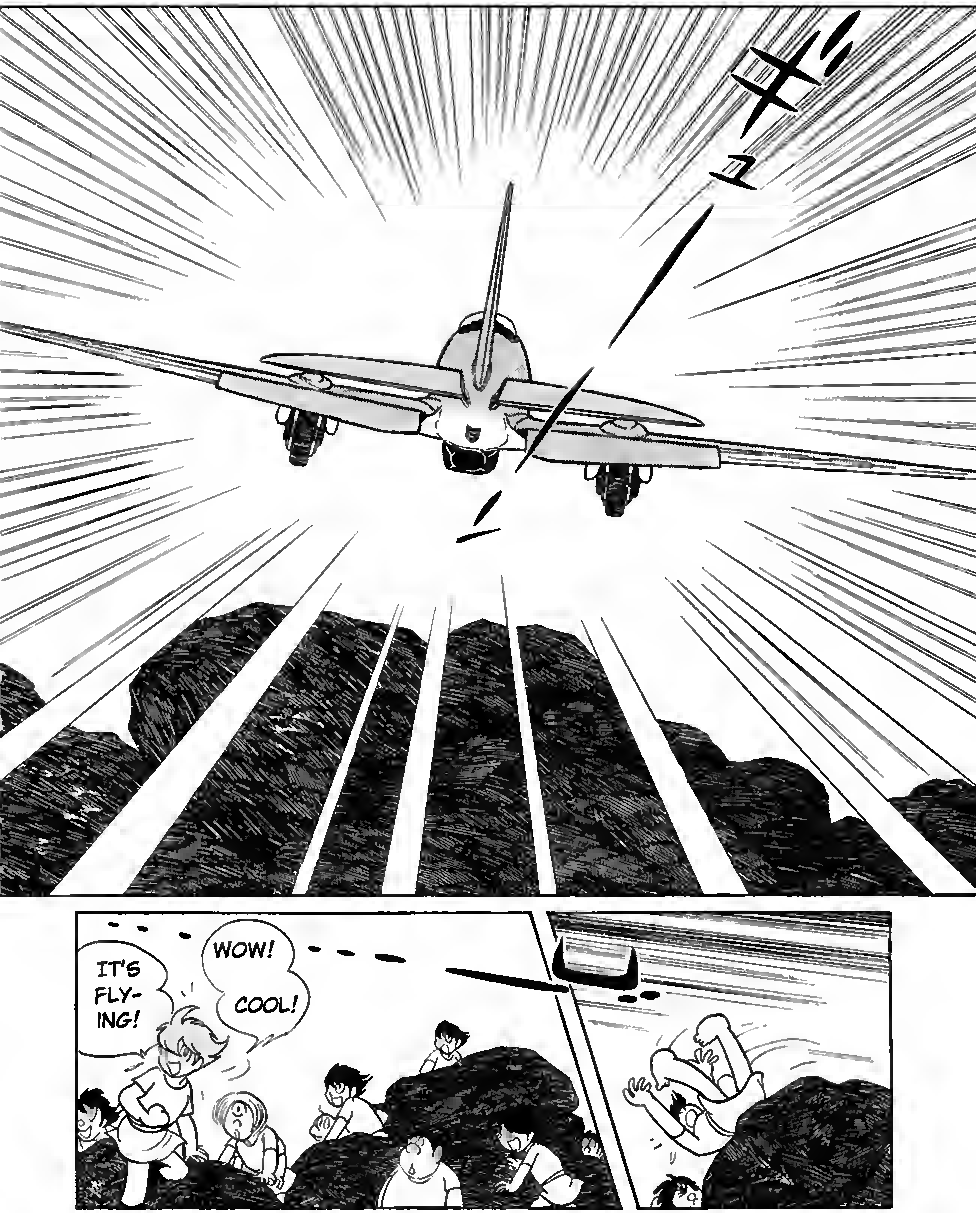
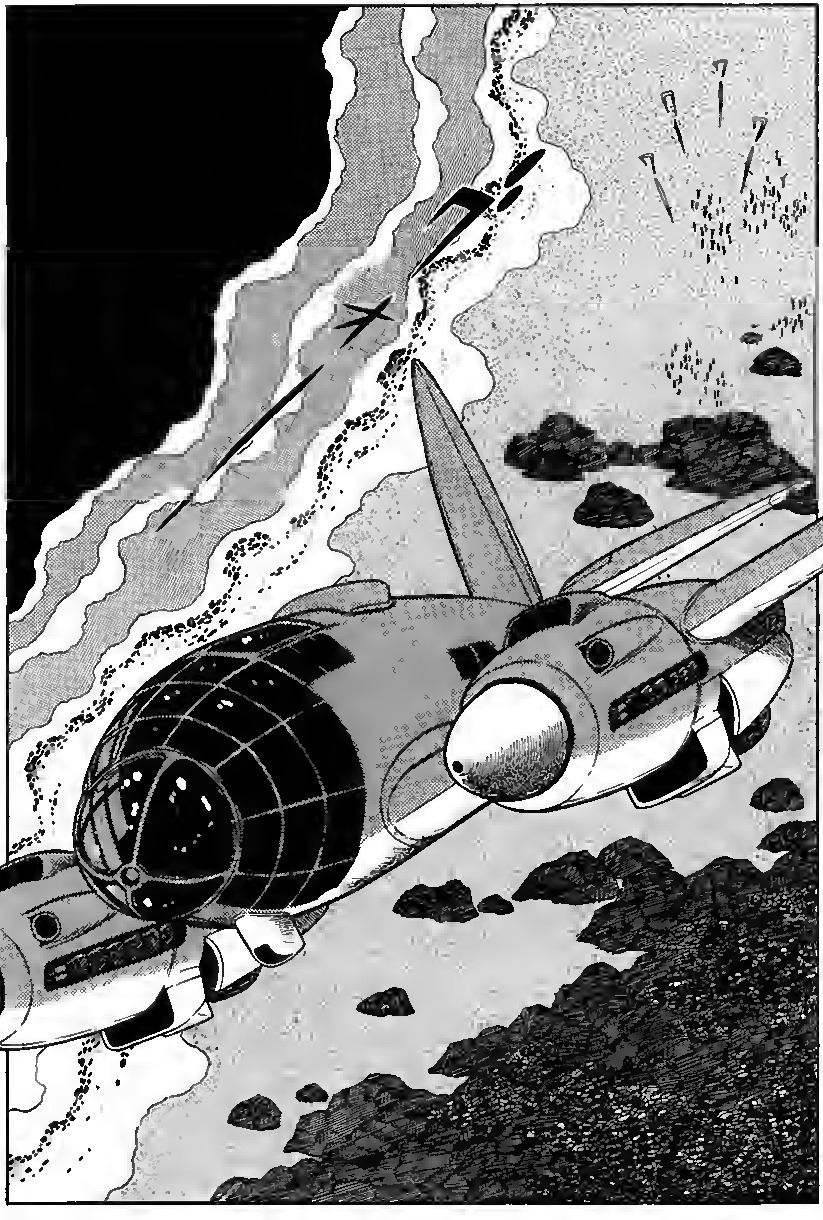
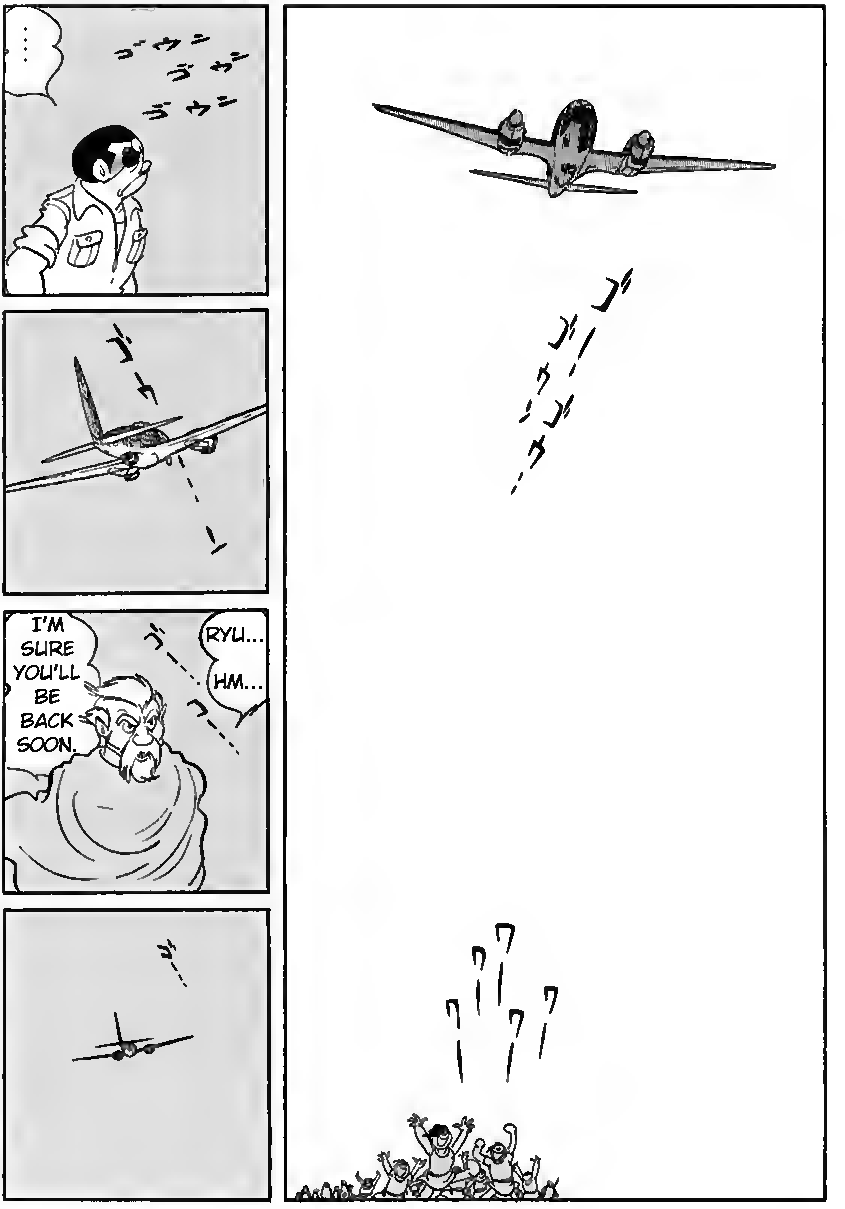


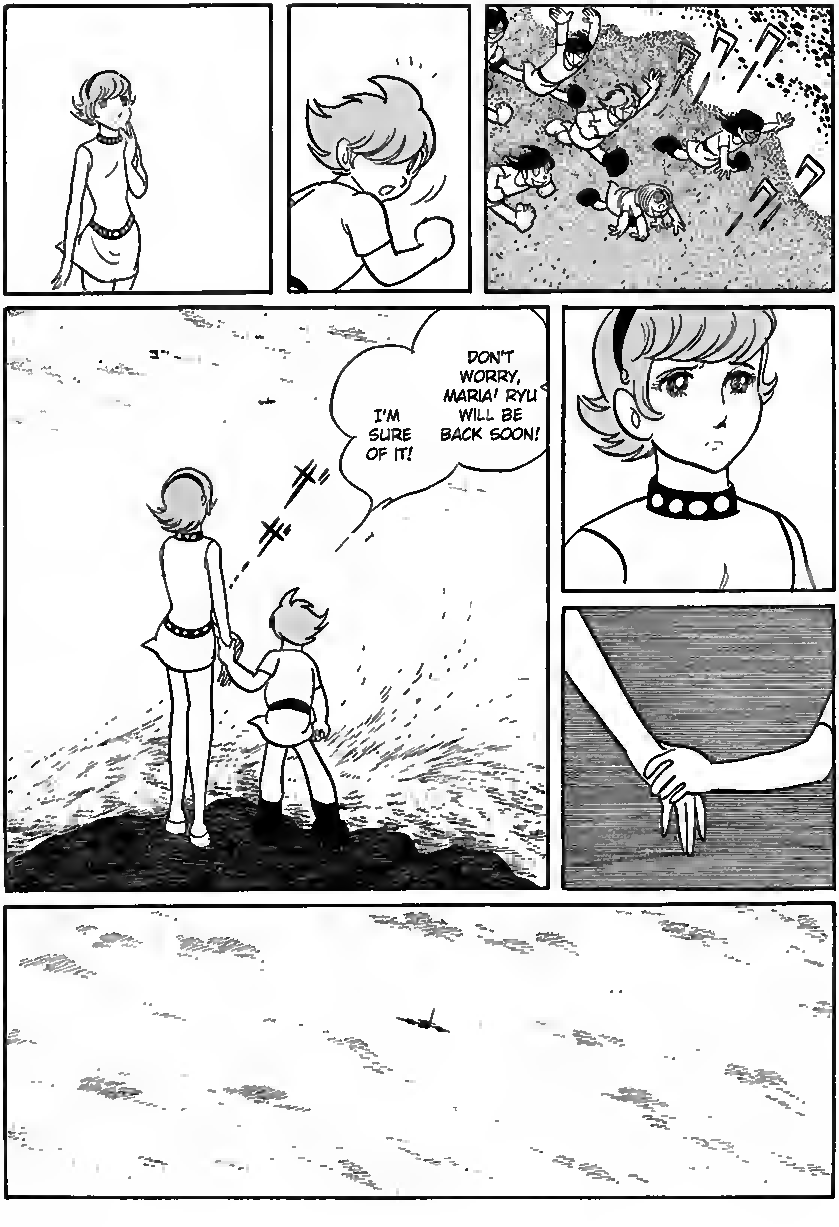


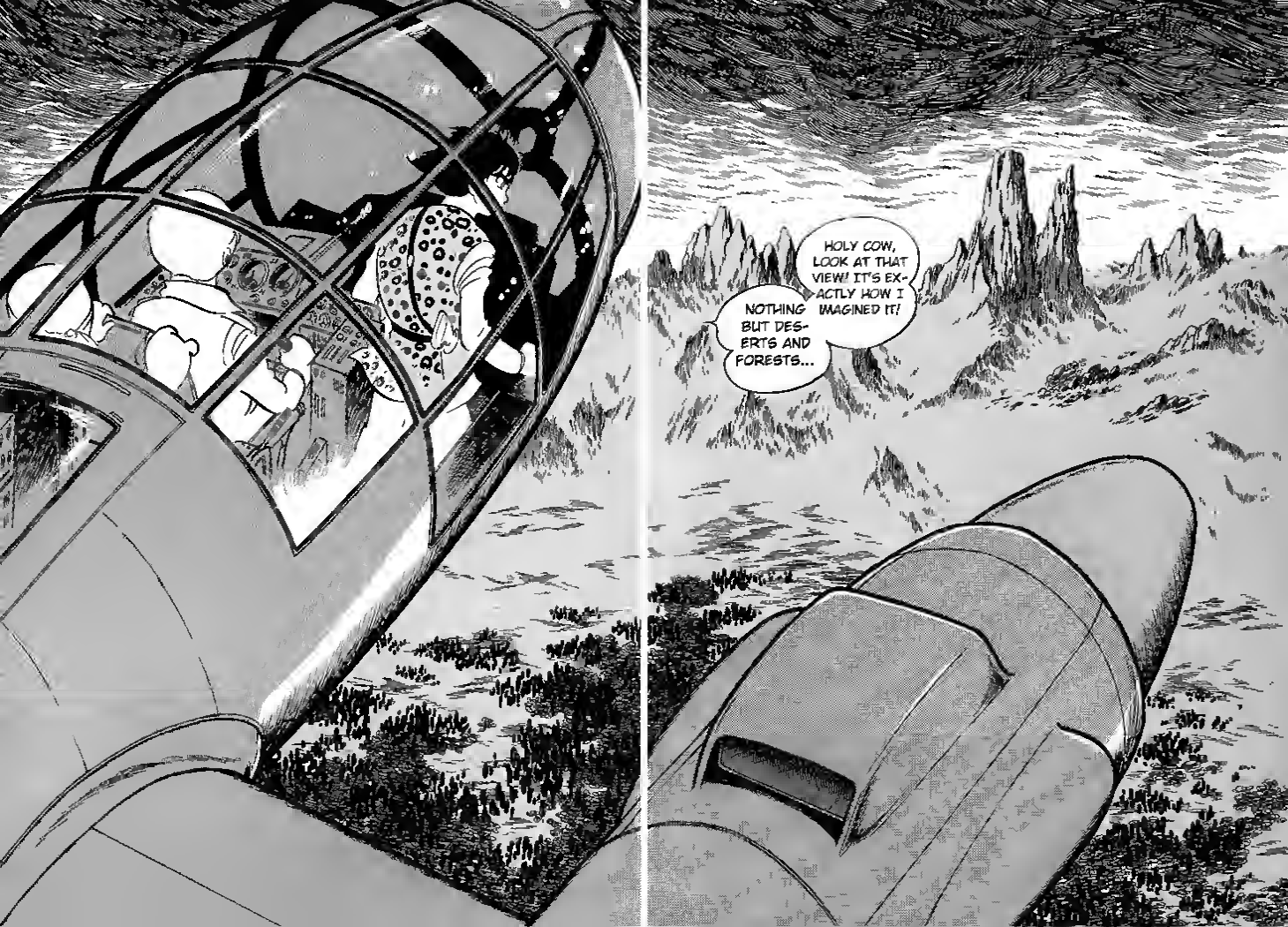
GROOO


ヒュー
IT'S FLY-ING!
WOW!
COOL!

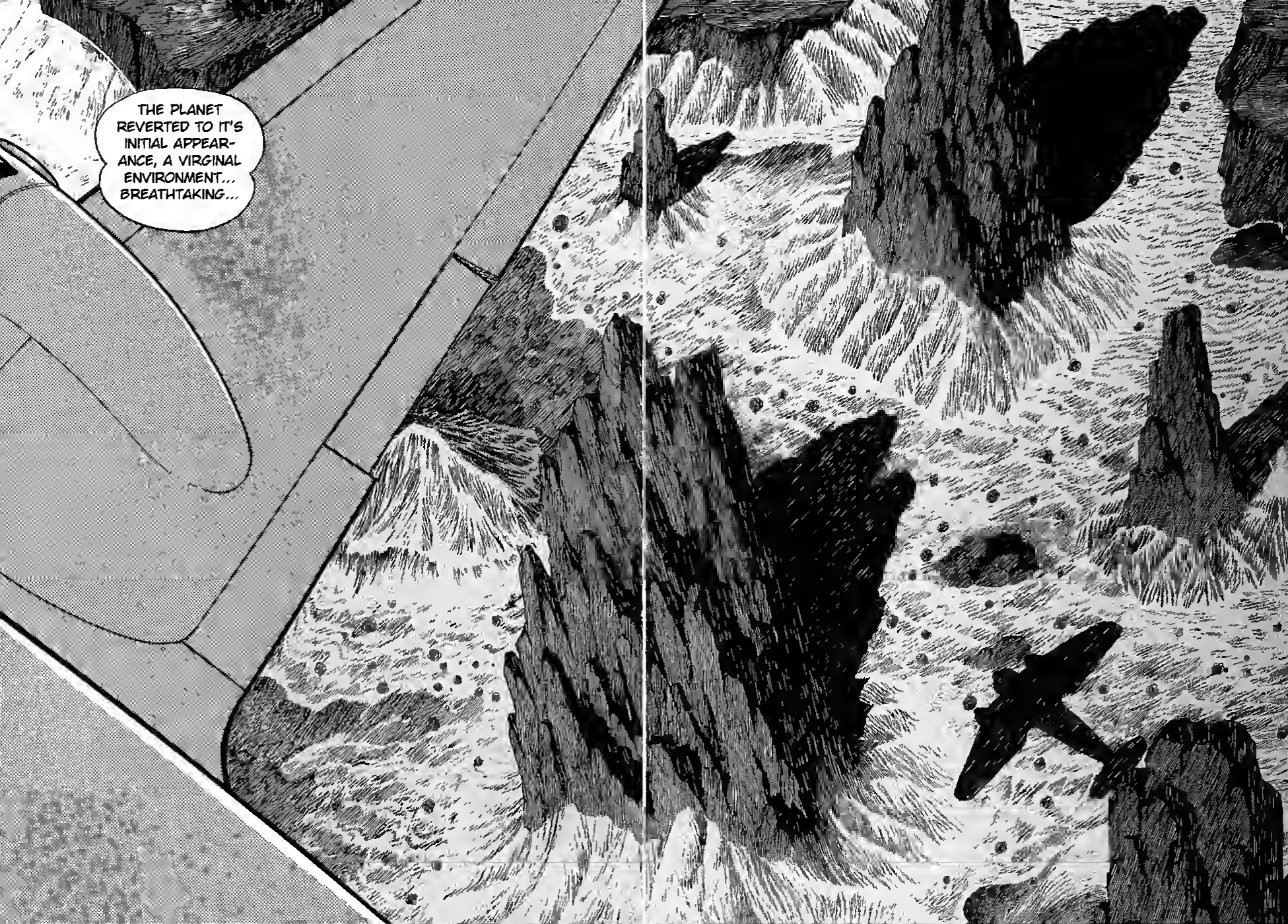


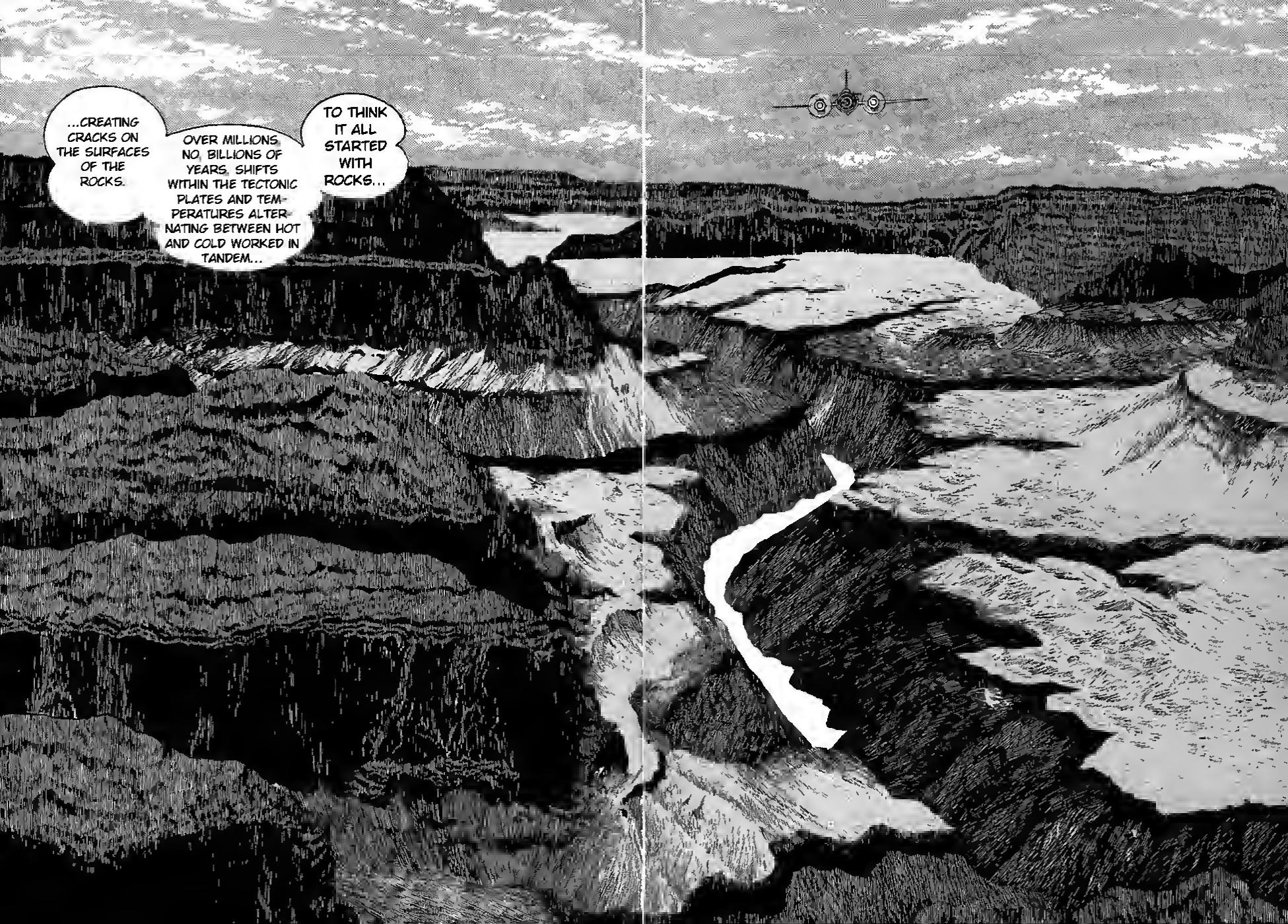

I'M SURE YOU'LL BE BACK SOON.
RYU...
HM...


DON'T WORRY, MARIA! RYU WILL BE BACK SOON!
I'M SURE OF IT!

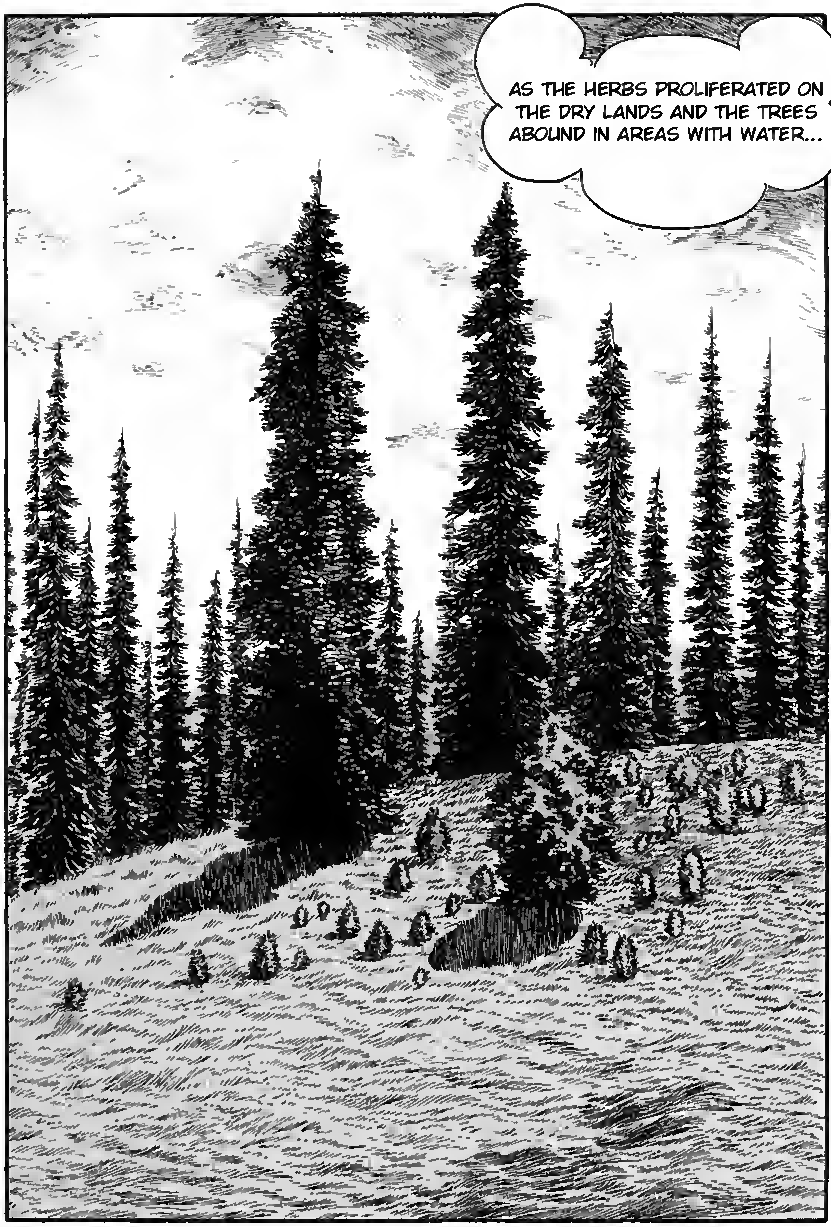

HOLY COW, LOOK AT THAT VIEW! IT'S EXACTLY HOW I IMAGINED IT!
NOTHING BUT DESERTS AND FORESTS...

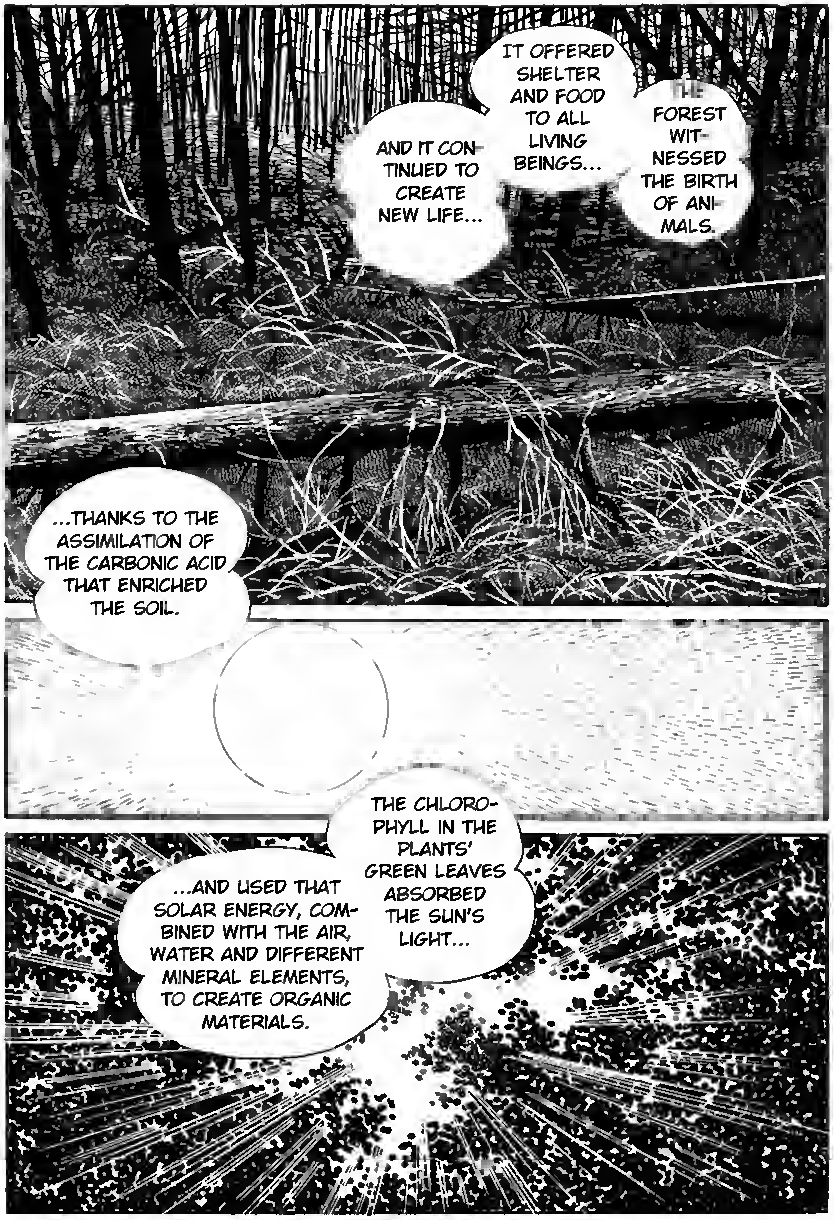
MOTHER NATURE CAN BE TRULY POWERFUL IF YOU LET HER WORK


THE PLANET REVERTED TO IT'S INITIAL APPEAR-ANCE, A VIRGINAL ENVIRONMENT... BREATHTAKING...


...CREATING CRACKS ON THE SURFACES OF THE ROCKS.
OVER MILLIONS, NO, BILLIONS OF YEARS, SHIFTS WITHIN THE TECTONIC PLATES AND TEMPERATURES ALTERNATING BETWEEN HOT AND COLD WORKED IN TANDEM...
TO THINK IT ALL STARTED WITH ROCKS...

EROSION DETACHED PARTS OF THE ROCKS INTO PEBBLES, WHICH SPREAD OUT WITH THE HELP OF THE WIND, WATER AND GRAVITY. OVER TIME, THEY SHRANK AND BECAME GRAINS OF SAND, A PRIMARY COMPONENT OF THE GROUND.
AND ON THE GROUND GREW- WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL THE "PIONEERS"...
LICHENS,
MOSSES,
FERNS...
...VEGETATION THAT SAW LITTLE WATER AND COULD SURVIVE ON AIR EXPOSED ROCKS.
IN FACT...
THIS VEGETATION SECRETED AN ACID THAT DECOMPOSED THE SALT IN THE GROUND, HELPING IT ABSORB WATER.
THAT HELPED CREATE A TERRAIN RICH WITH NUTRIENTS, HELPING IT ACCOMMODATE MORE DEVELOPED FLORA.


AS THE HERBS PROLIFERATED ON THE DRY LANDS AND THE TREES ABOUND IN AREAS WITH WATER...

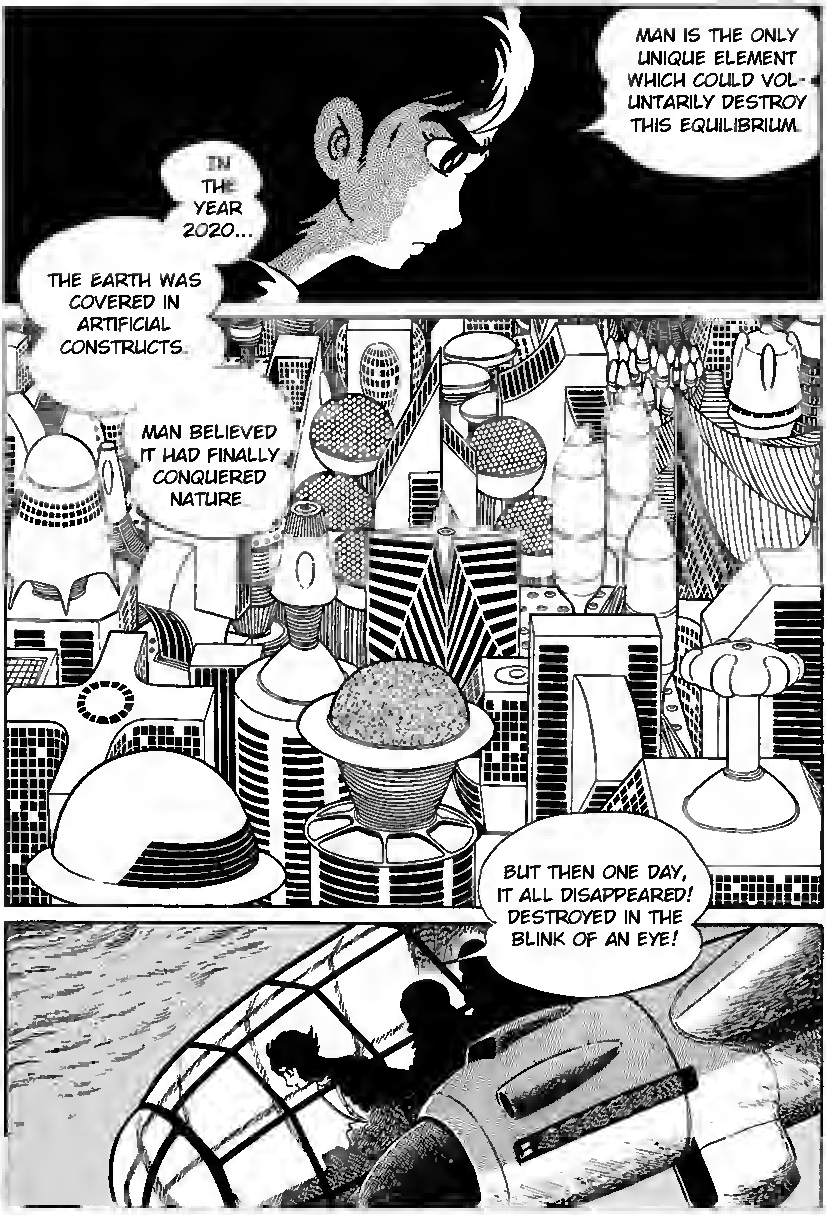

AND IT CONTINUED TO CREATE NEW LIFE...
IT OFFERED SHELTER AND FOOD TO ALL LIVING BEINGS...
THE FOREST WITNESSED THE BIRTH OF ANIMALS.
...THANKS TO THE ASSIMILATION OF THE CARBONIC ACID THAT ENRICHED THE SOIL.
THE CHLOROPHYLL IN THE PLANTS' GREEN LEAVES ABSORBED THE SUN'S LIGHT...
...AND USED THAT SOLAR ENERGY, COMBINED WITH THE AIR, WATER AND DIFFERENT MINERAL ELEMENTS, TO CREATE ORGANIC MATERIALS.

AFTER THAT...
THE VEGETATION FED THE EARTH WITH THEIR ROOTS, OR MYCELIUM...
...THE TREES FERTILIZING THIS ENVIRONMENT EVEN IN DEATH.
THE HOLES LEFT IN THE GROUND BY FALLEN TREES COLLECTED RAIN WATER...
...WHICH MIXED WITH THE DECOMPOSING VEGETATION...
PROVIDING NUTRIENTS TO FEED THE INSECTS AND WORMS ON THE FOREST FLOOR...
THEN SMALL ANIMALS, LIKE MICE AND MOLES, CAME ALONG...
...AND BY EATING THE WORMS AND VISITING INSECTS, THEY IN TURN MADE THE LAND MORE FERTILE. EVENTUALLY, THEY RETURNED TO THE EARTH...
...WHICH FROM THEM ABSORBED EVEN MORE ELEMENTS TO FEED THE VEGETATION

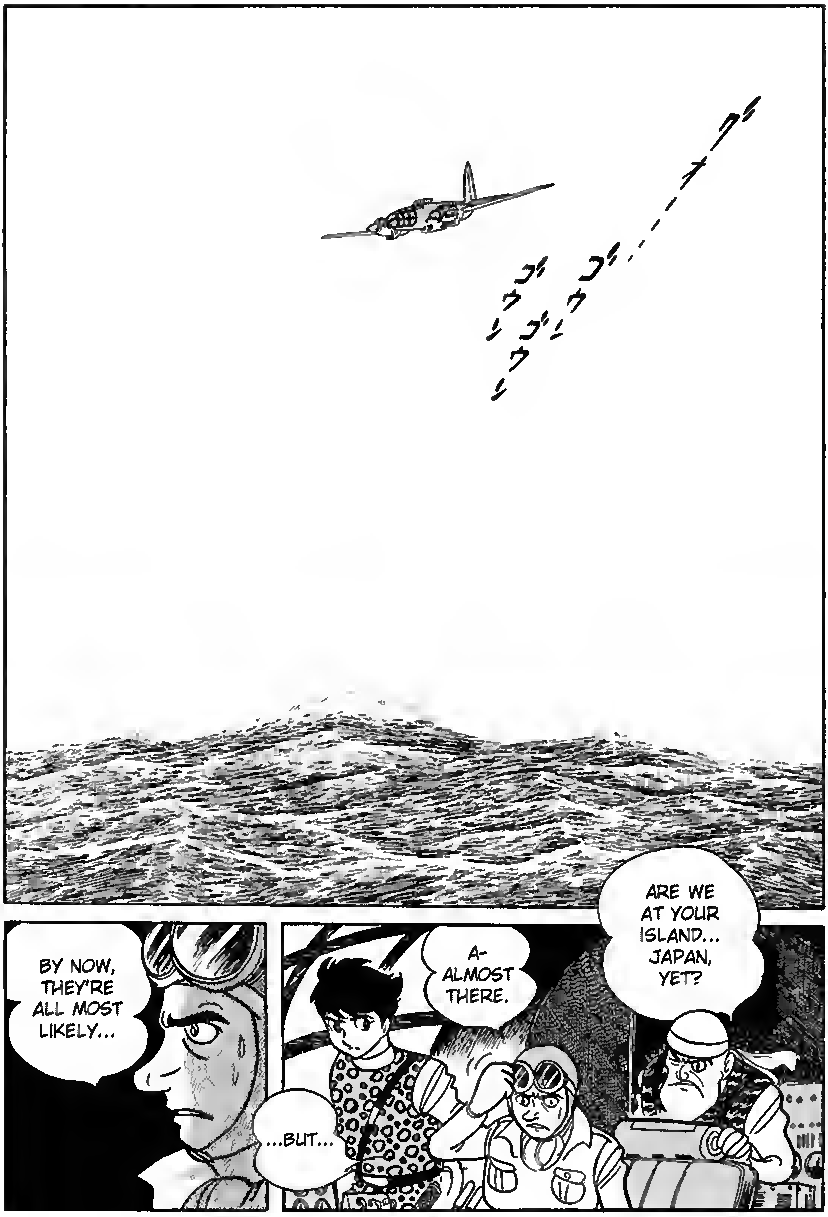
EVENTUALLY THE ANIMALS THEMSELVES RETURNED TO THE EARTH, OF COURSE.
BUT THE FOOD CHAIN GOES ON WITHOUT THEM...
ALL OF LIFE, INCLUDING HUMANS, EXISTS THANKS TO THE FRAGILE EQUILIBRIUM WE REST ON.
THE NUMBER OF INSECTS WHICH FEED ON PLANTS INCREASES IF THEIR NATURAL PREDATORS DISAPPEAR.
IF INSECTS DISAPPEARED, SMALLER ANIMALS WOULD BE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FOOD.
AND THE LARGE ANIMALS WHO FEED ON THE SMALL WOULD INEVITABLY DISAPPEAR.
MANY PLANTS WOULD VANISH TOO...
...BECAUSE WITHOUT POLLINATING INSECTS, THEY EFFECTIVELY CAN'T REPRODUCE!

IN OTHER WORDS, IN NATURE, ALL ANIMALS AND PLANTS AND WHATEVER ELSE ARE AN ESSENTIAL LINK IN THIS COMMUNITY. A COMMUNITY THAT WE ARE ALL A PART OF!

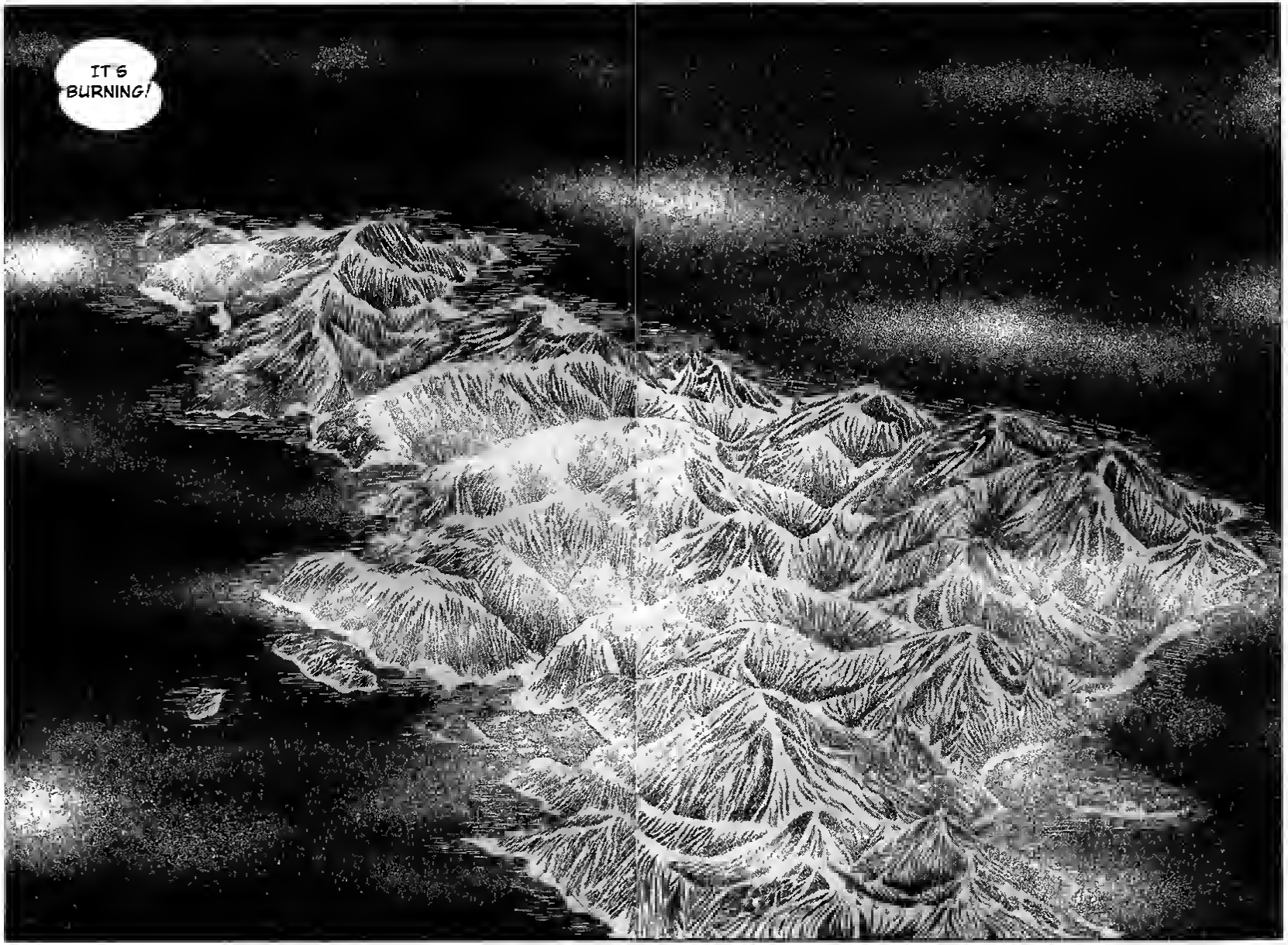
BUT IF THIS EQUILIBRIUM GETS BROKEN?
TAKE FOR EXAMPLE:
MEN TRYING TO PROTECT AN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF DEER WHO LIVE IN A FORESTED ZONE KILL THE COYOTES WHO WERE THE PREDATORS OF THOSE DEER.
THEIR NUMBERS INCREASED, BUT DUE TO THIS INCREASE THE DEER COULDN'T FIND ENOUGH FOOD TO EAT, SO NEVERTHELESS THIS SPECIES WENT EXTINCT.
IN FACT, THE DEER ATE THE BUDS OFF TREES AND HERBS. THEY WERE DESTROYING THE FOREST, THEIR OWN HOME.
IT'S THE SAME PRINCIPLE BEHIND SPRAYING INSECTICIDES OVER PLANTS TO KILL PARASITES. THE PLANTS STILL DIE IN THE END.
THERE ARE MANY EXAMPLES...
AND NEW TOWNS BUILT WHERE THERE WERE ONCE TREES AND MOUNTAINS. THE TERRAIN, ONCE STEADY THANKS TO THE TREE ROOTS ANCHORED DEEP INTO THE GROUND, BECAME VERY FRAGILE. THESE TOWNS WERE FINALLY LEVELED AS THE LAND BENEATH THEM GAVE WAY.
ALL BECAUSE OF MAN...


MAN IS THE ONLY UNIQUE ELEMENT WHICH COULD VOLUNTARILY DESTROY THIS EQUILIBRIUM.
IN THE YEAR 2020...
THE EARTH WAS COVERED IN ARTIFICIAL CONSTRUCTS.
MAN BELIEVED IT HAD FINALLY CONQUERED NATURE
BUT THEN ONE DAY, IT ALL DISAPPEARED! DESTROYED IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE!

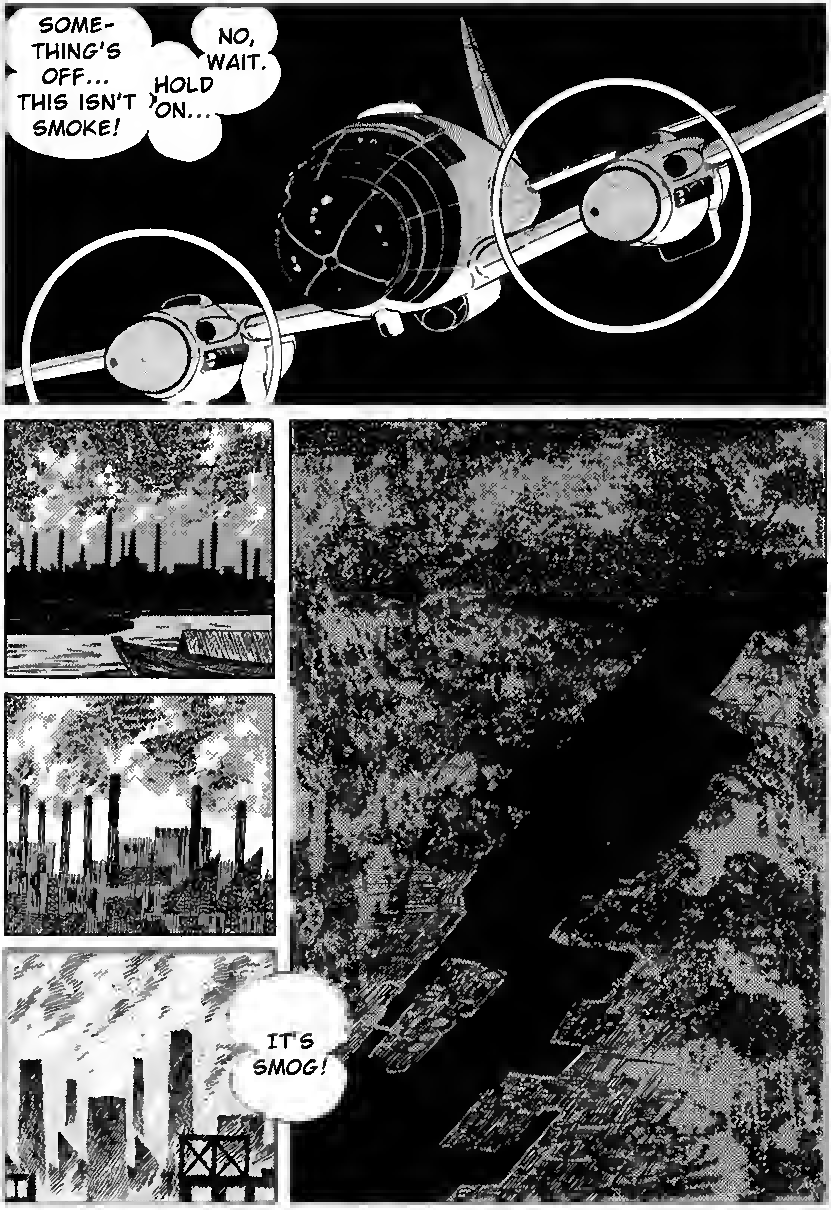
THE FUTURE RULERS OF THIS PLANET, WON'T BE MAN, BUT NATURE!
HERE, HUMANITY IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF NATURE, A GLOBAL COMMUNITY!
IN THE YEARS AND YEARS WITHOUT MAN, NATURE HAS REASSERTED ITSELF!
BUT LOOK! JUST LOOK OUT THERE!

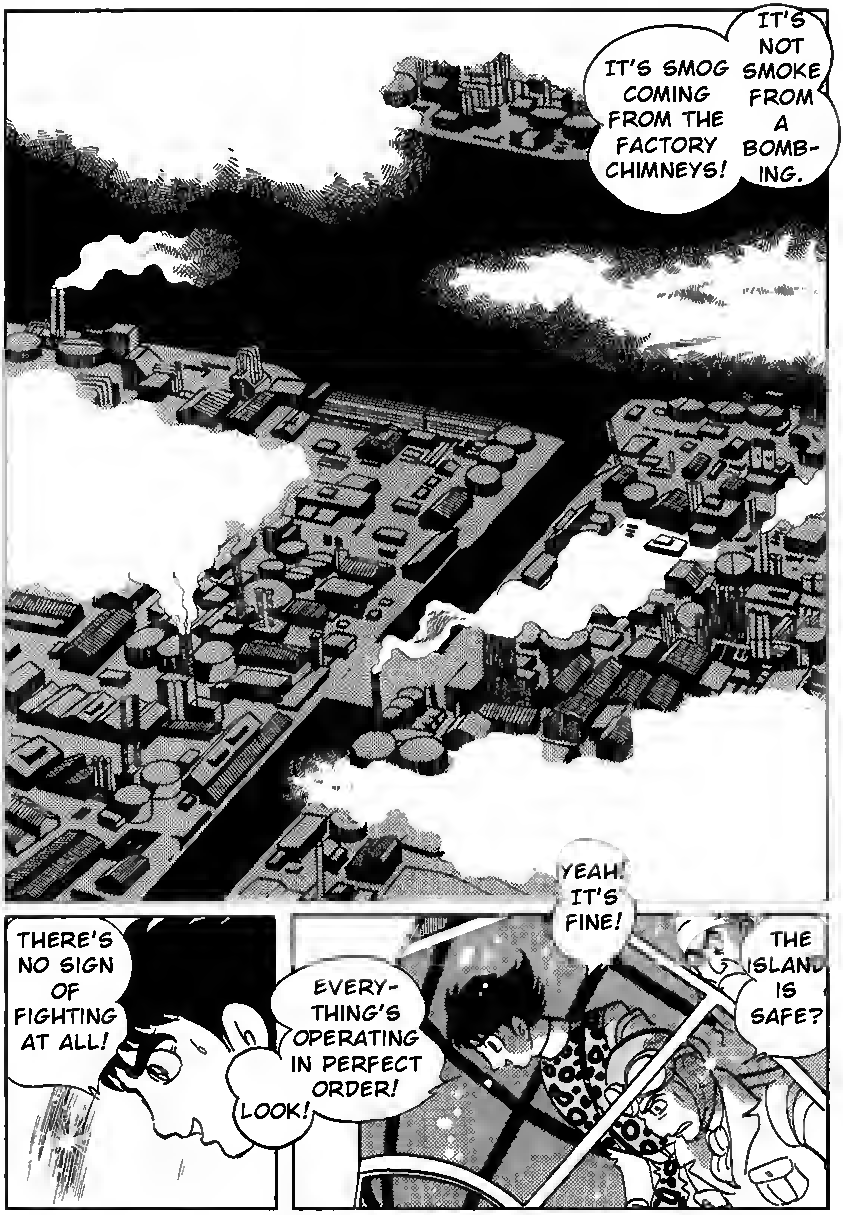

ARE WE AT YOUR ISLAND... JAPAN, YET?
A- ALMOST THERE.
...BUT...
BY NOW, THEY'RE ALL MOST LIKELY...

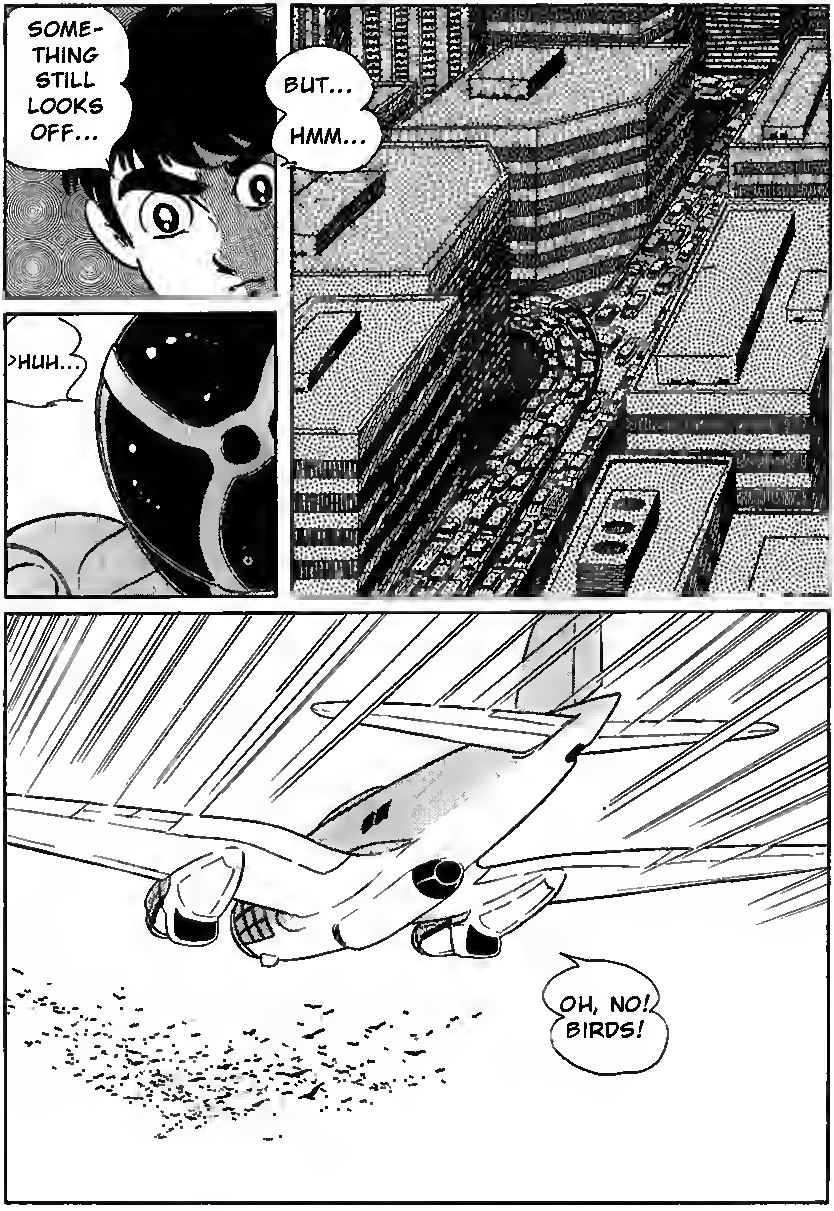
THERE IT IS! IT'S JAPAN!
EH? THAT'S IT?

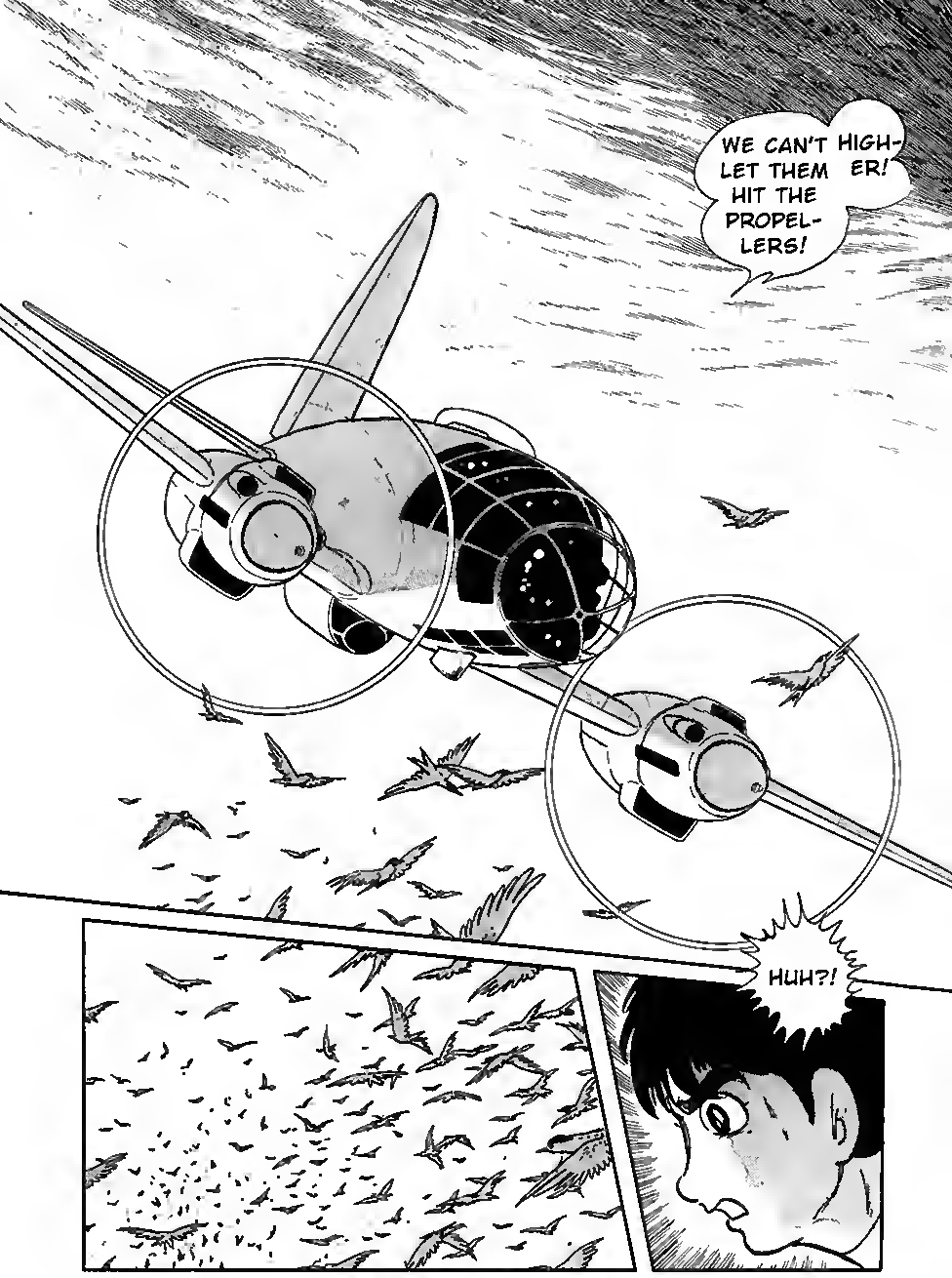

IT'S BURNING!

DID THE MUTANTS BOMB THE ISLAND?
ALL THAT SMOKE.


SOME-
THING'S
OFF...
THIS ISN'T
SMOKE!
NO,
WAIT.
HOLD
ON...
IT'S
SMOG!


IT'S SMOG COMING FROM THE FACTORY CHIMNEYS!
IT'S NOT SMOKE FROM A BOMBING.
THERE'S NO SIGN OF FIGHTING AT ALL!
LOOK!
EVERYTHING'S OPERATING IN PERFECT ORDER!
YEAH! IT'S FINE!
THE ISLAND IS SAFE?


SOME-
THING
STILL
LOOKS
OFF...
BUT...
HMM...
>HUH...
OH, NO!
BIRDS!


WE CAN'T LET THEM HIT THE PROPELLERS!
HIGHER!
HUH?!

GET HIGH-ER!
THEY'RE STILL COMING! WE NEED TO GET HIGHER!
AH!

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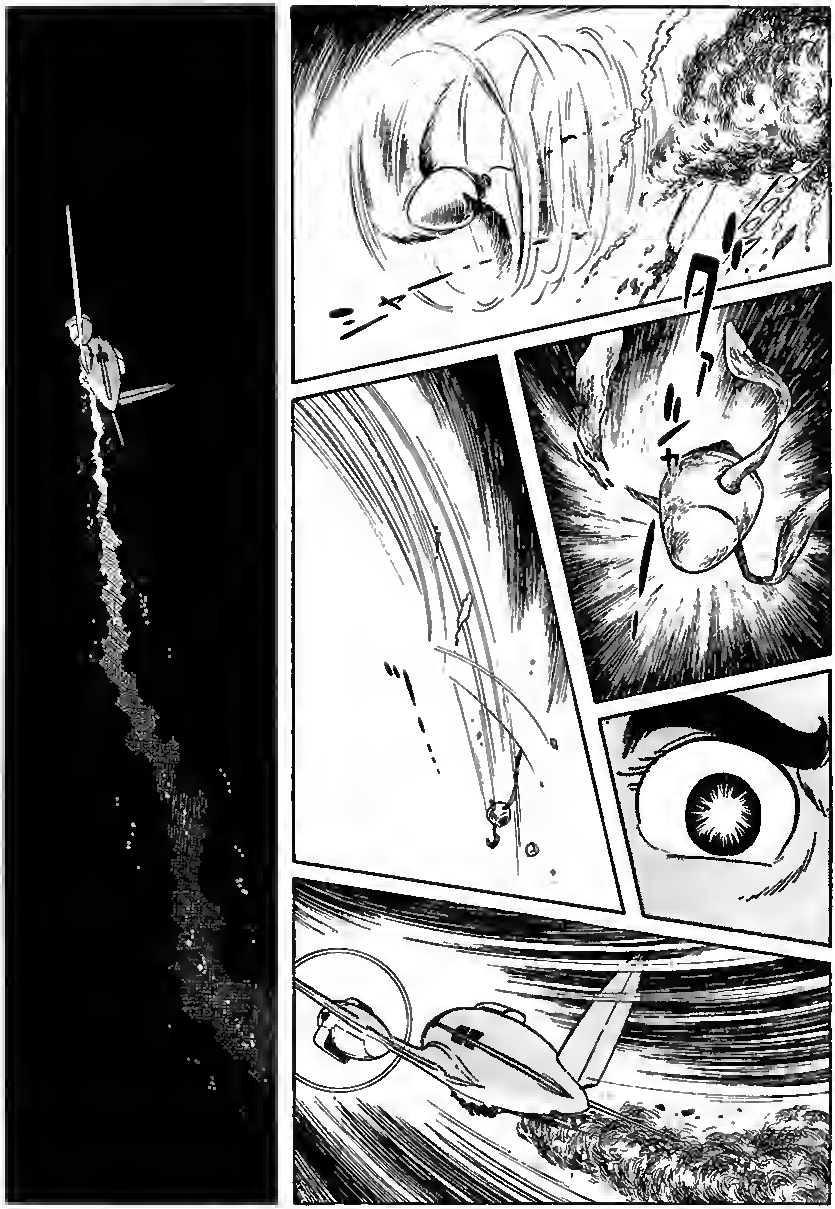
WAAAH!
BUT... WHAT?
WHAT'S WRONG?

THERE'S A WALL!
THEY PUT UP A BARRI-ER!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BUT I DIDN'T SEE A DAMN THING!
I KNOW! IT'S COMPLETELY INVISIBLE!
HEY, PILOT! YOUR PEOPLE MAKE THIS?
NO WAY! WE DON'T HAVE THE CAPABILITIES...
OH, CRAP! WE'RE DONE!
THE ENGINE'S DEAD! WE'RE GOING DOWN!

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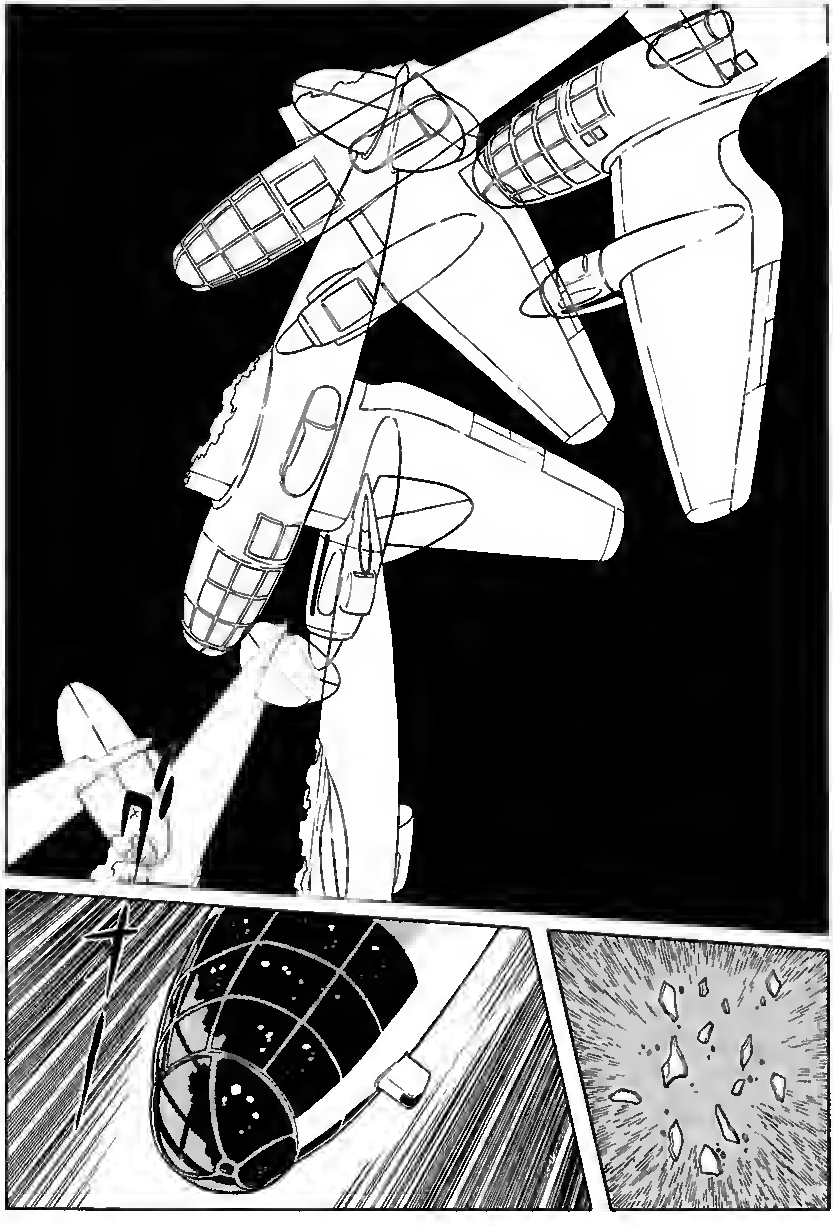
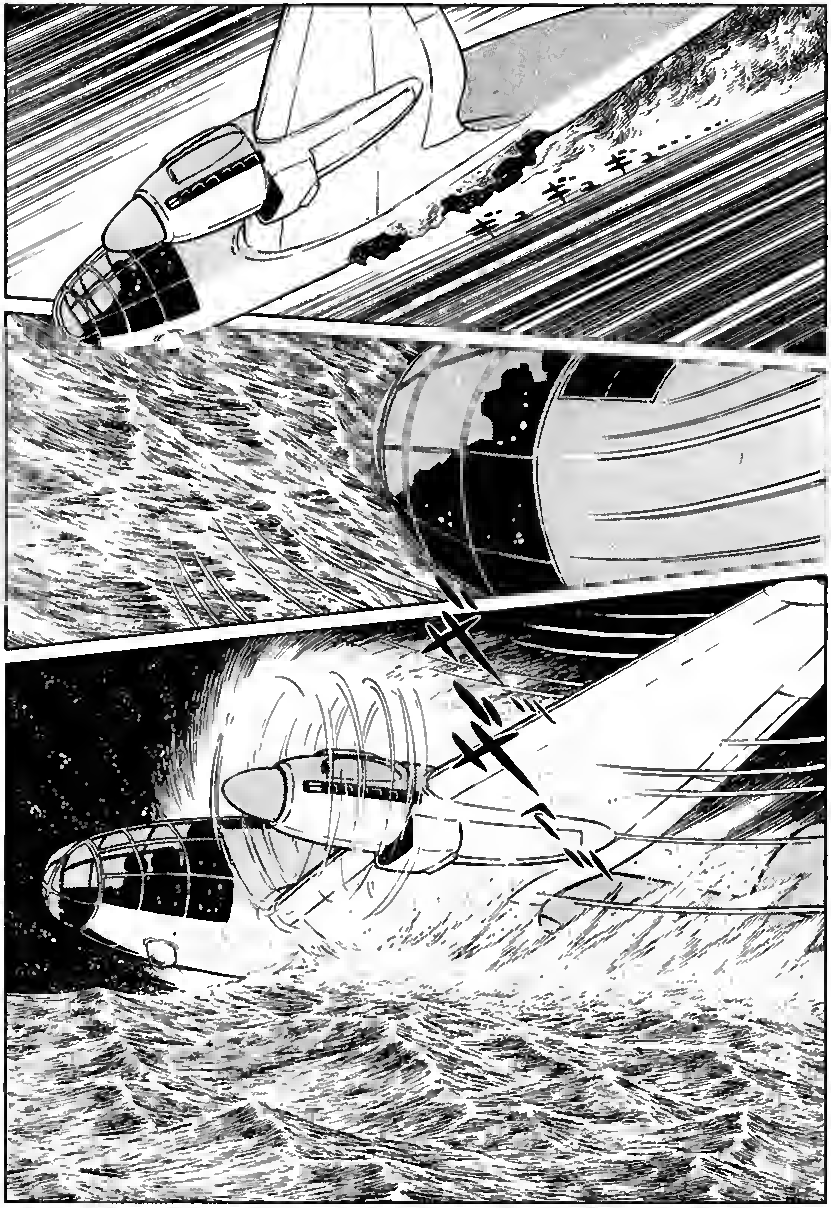
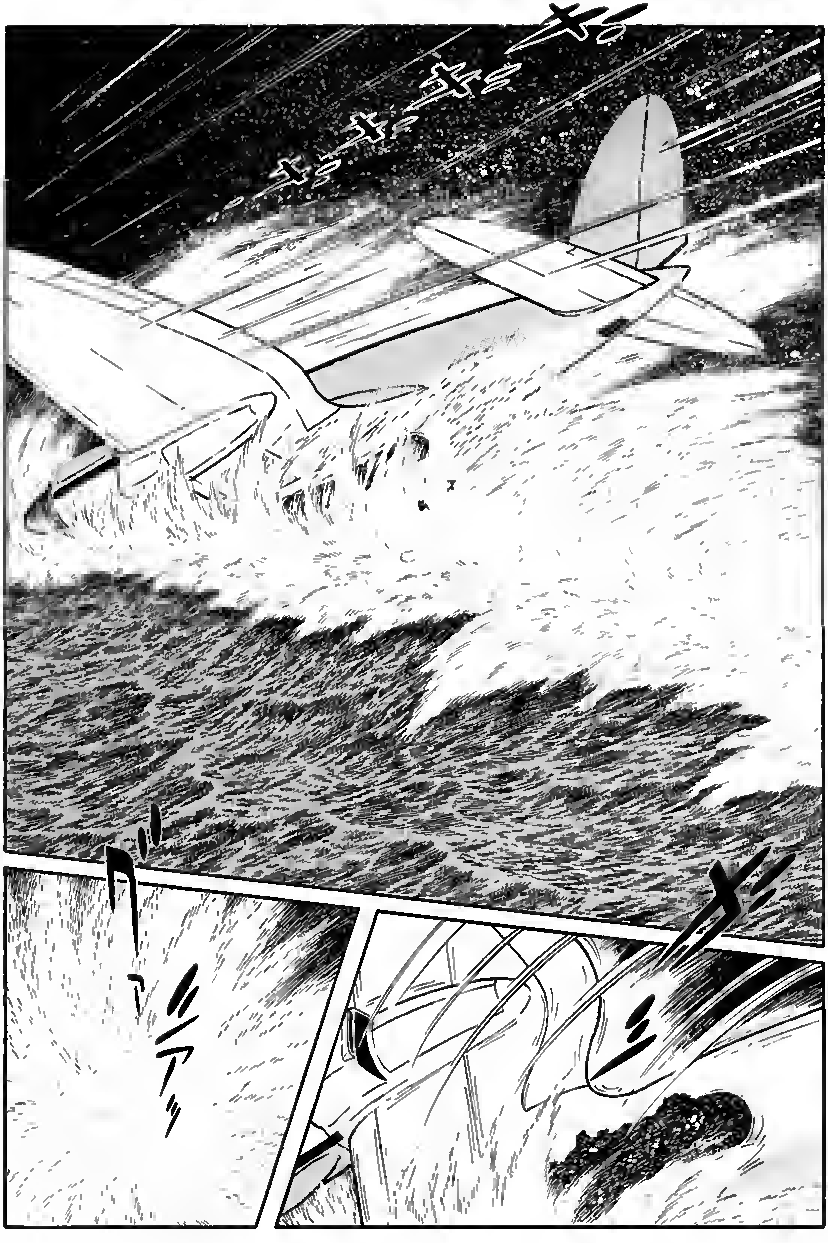
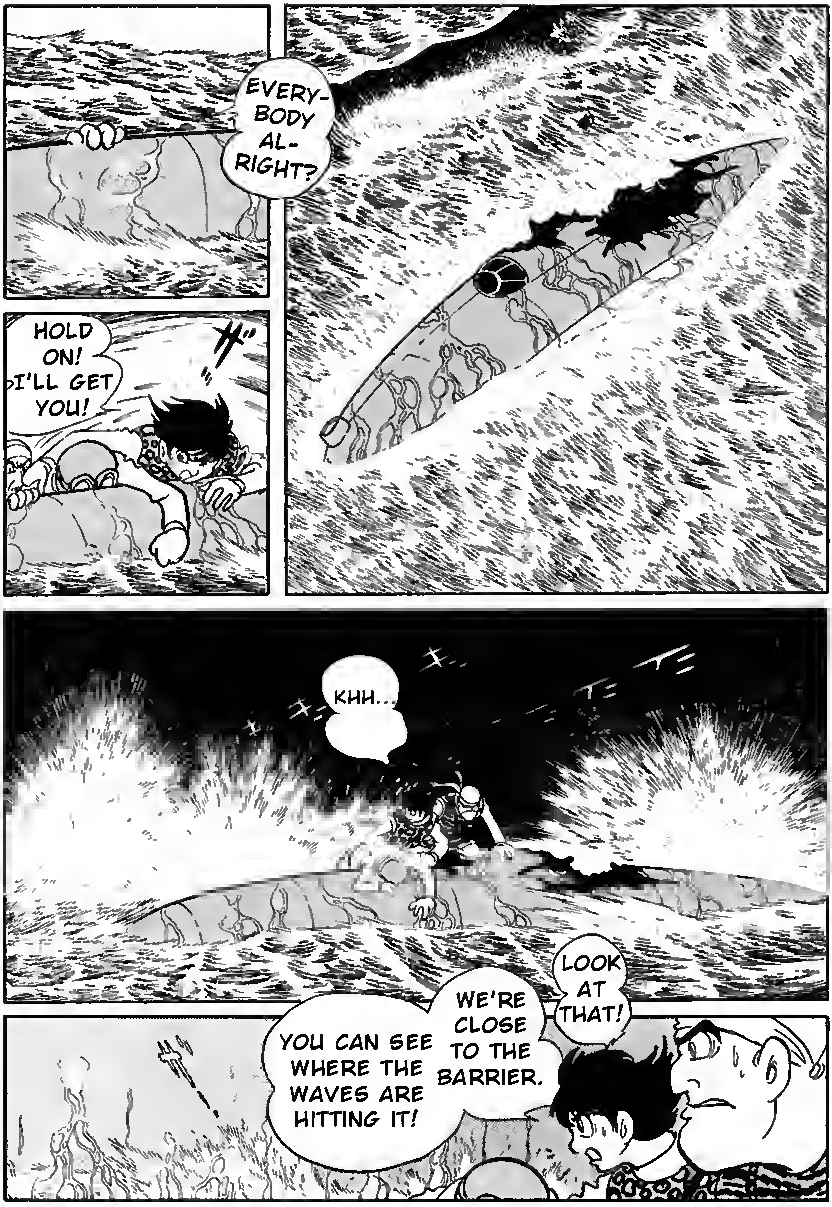
カ!

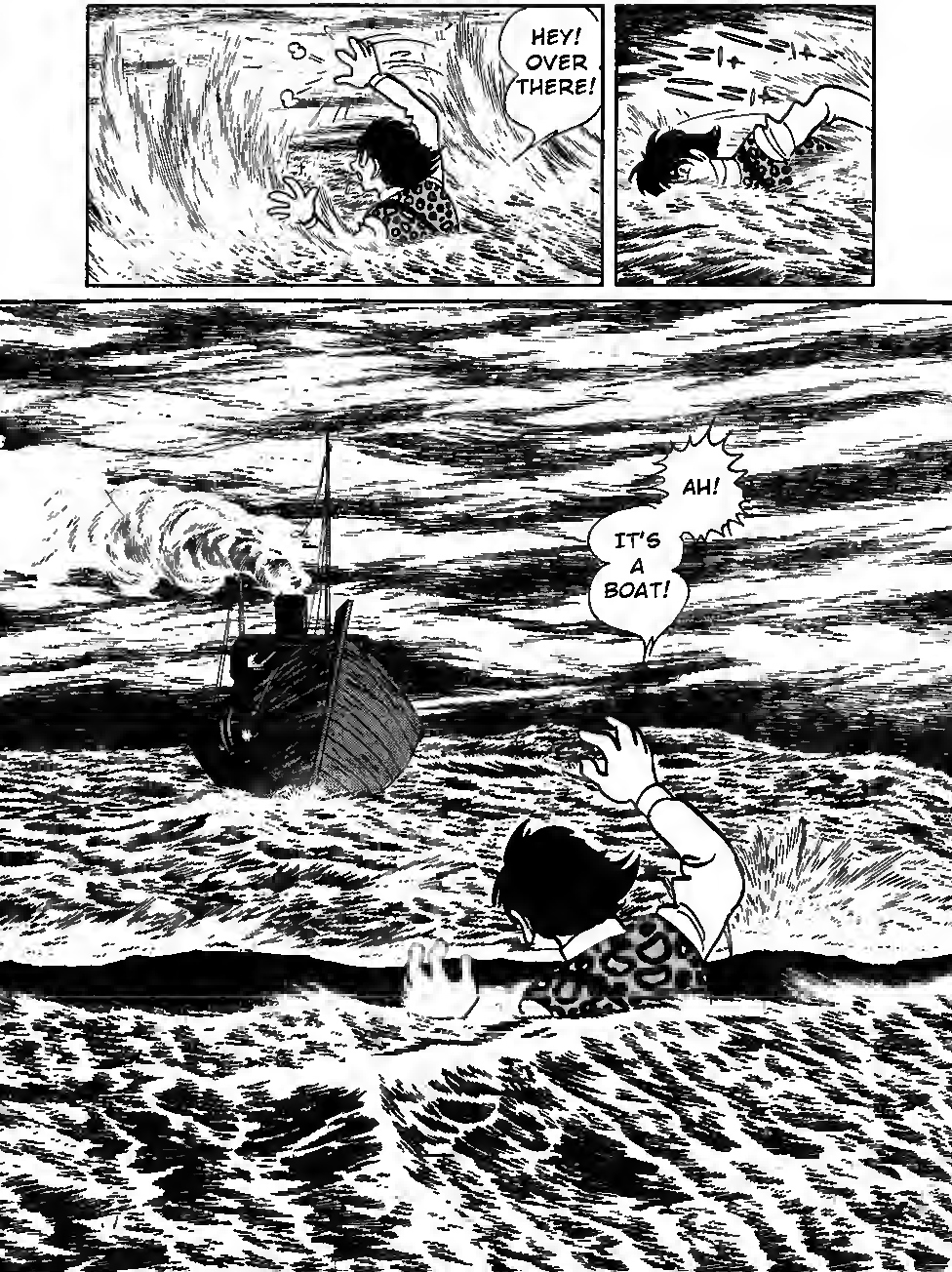


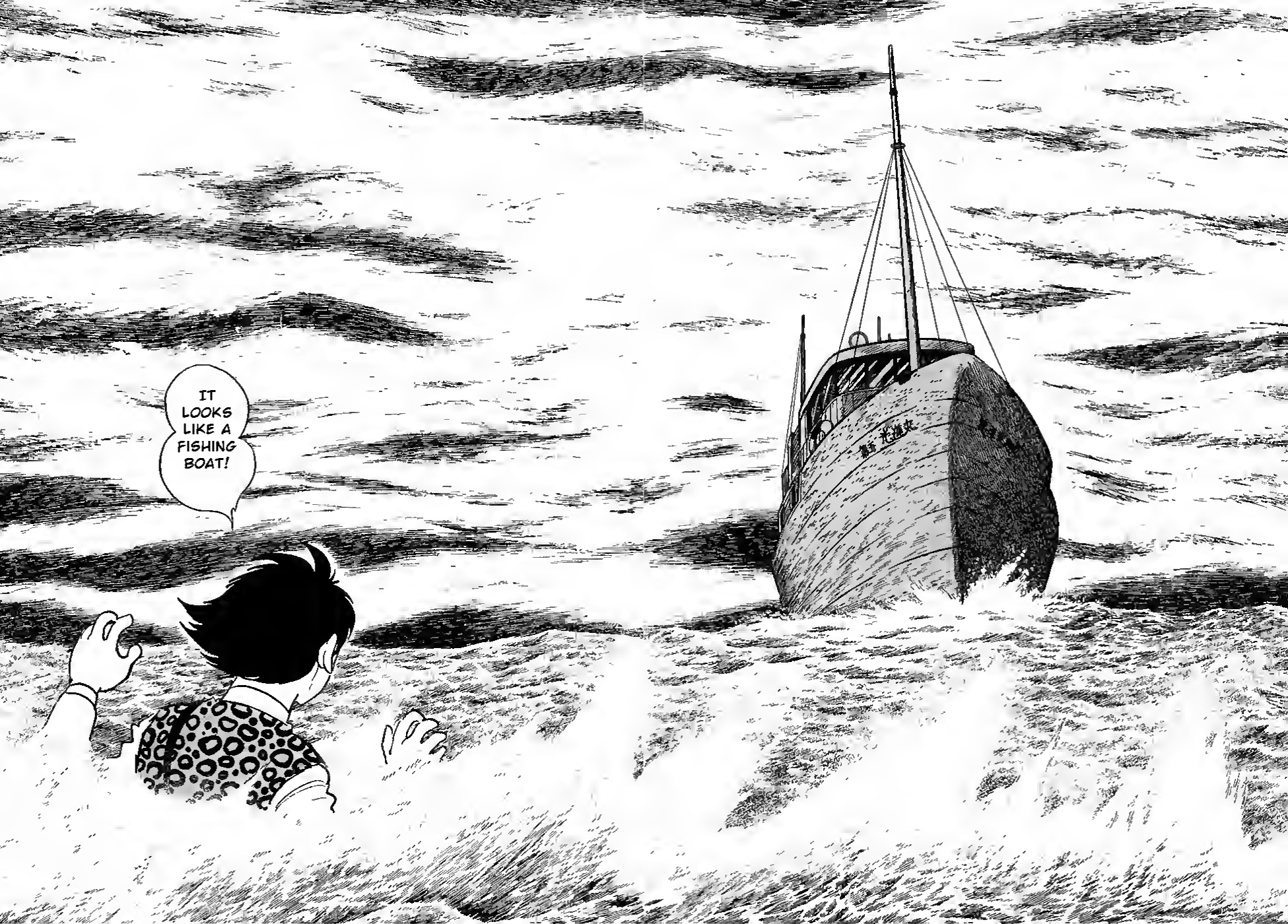
WHOO
-A-

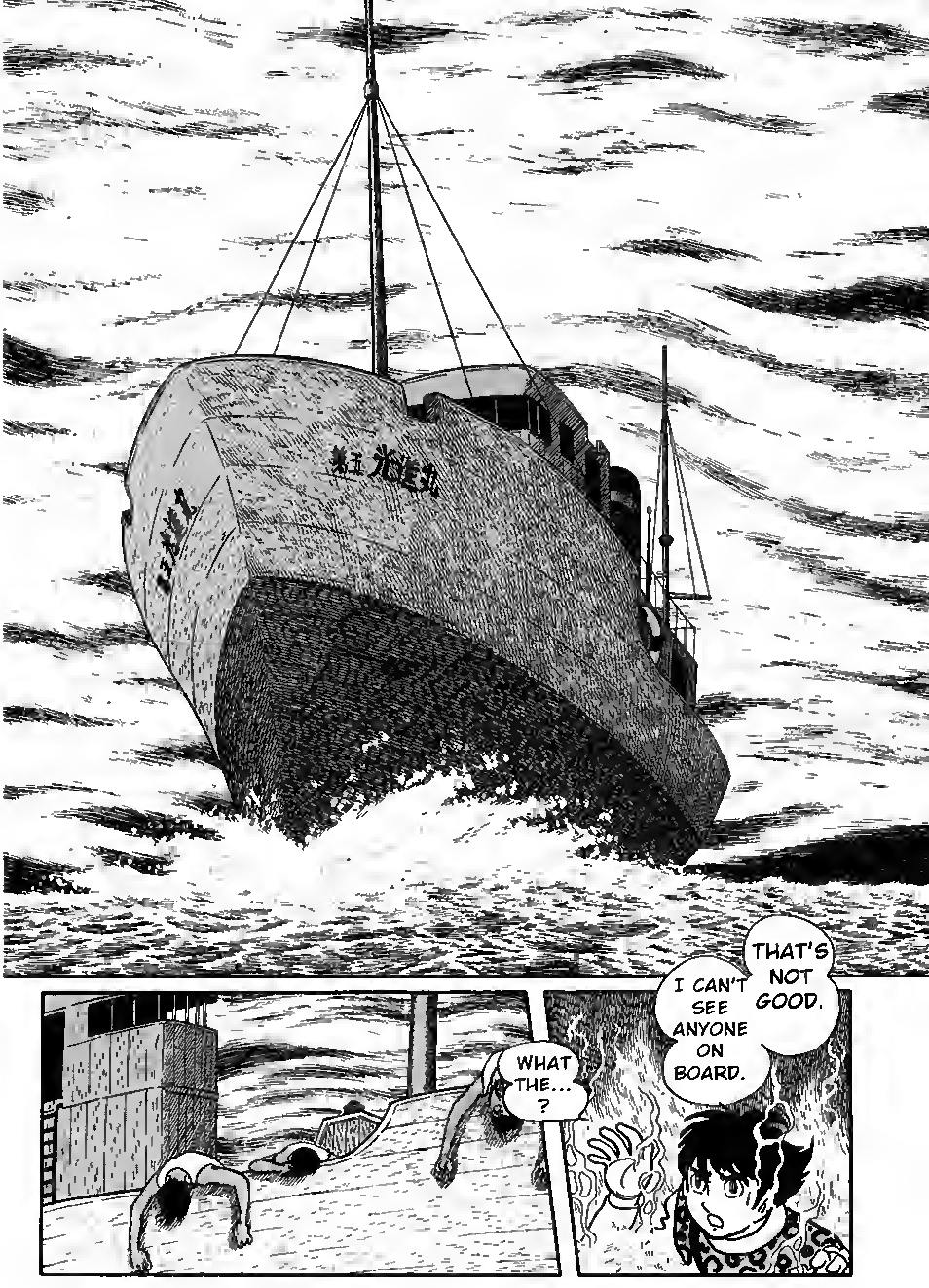

ギュギュギュ…

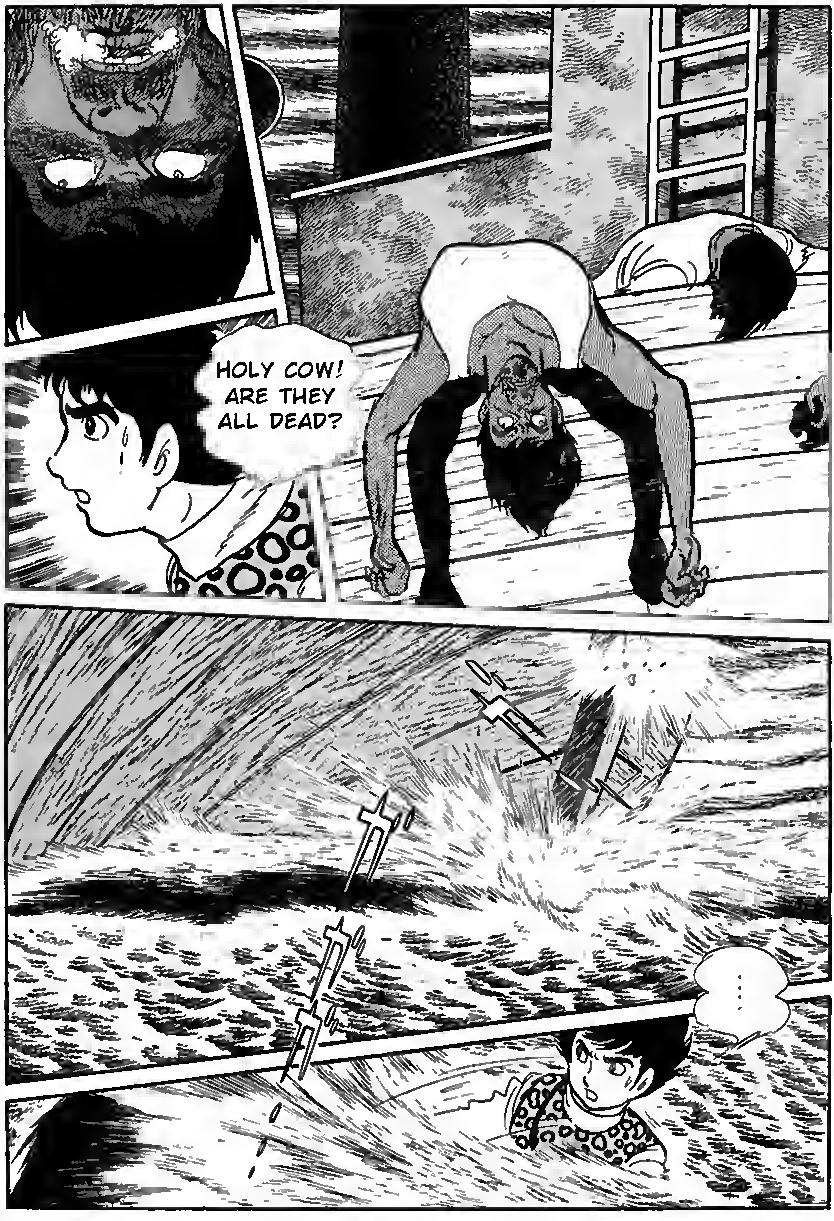


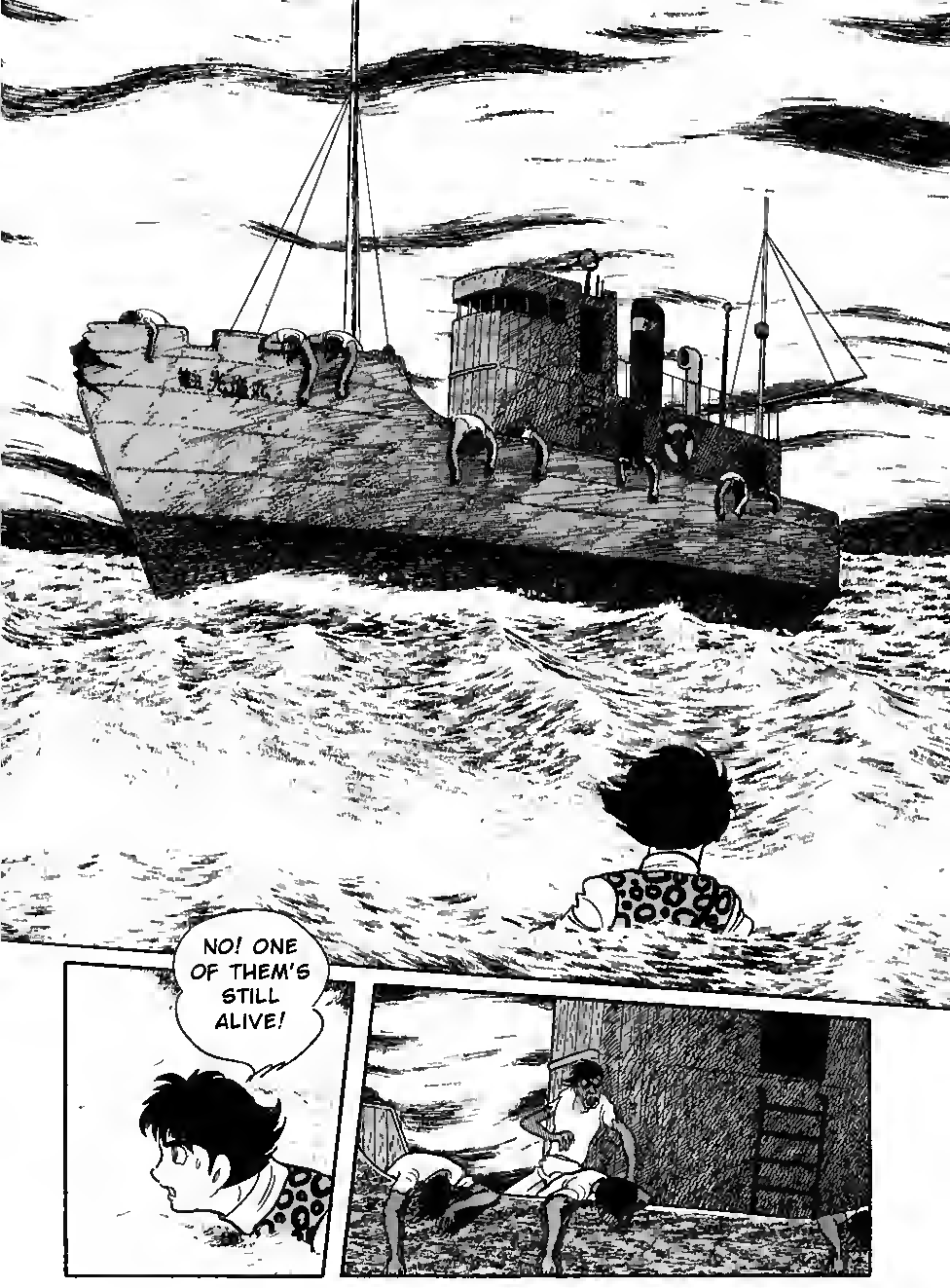

EVERY-BODY AL-RIGHT?
HOLD ON! I'LL GET YOU!
KHH...
LOOK AT THAT!
WE'RE CLOSE TO THE BARRIER.
YOU CAN SEE WHERE THE WAVES ARE HITTING IT!

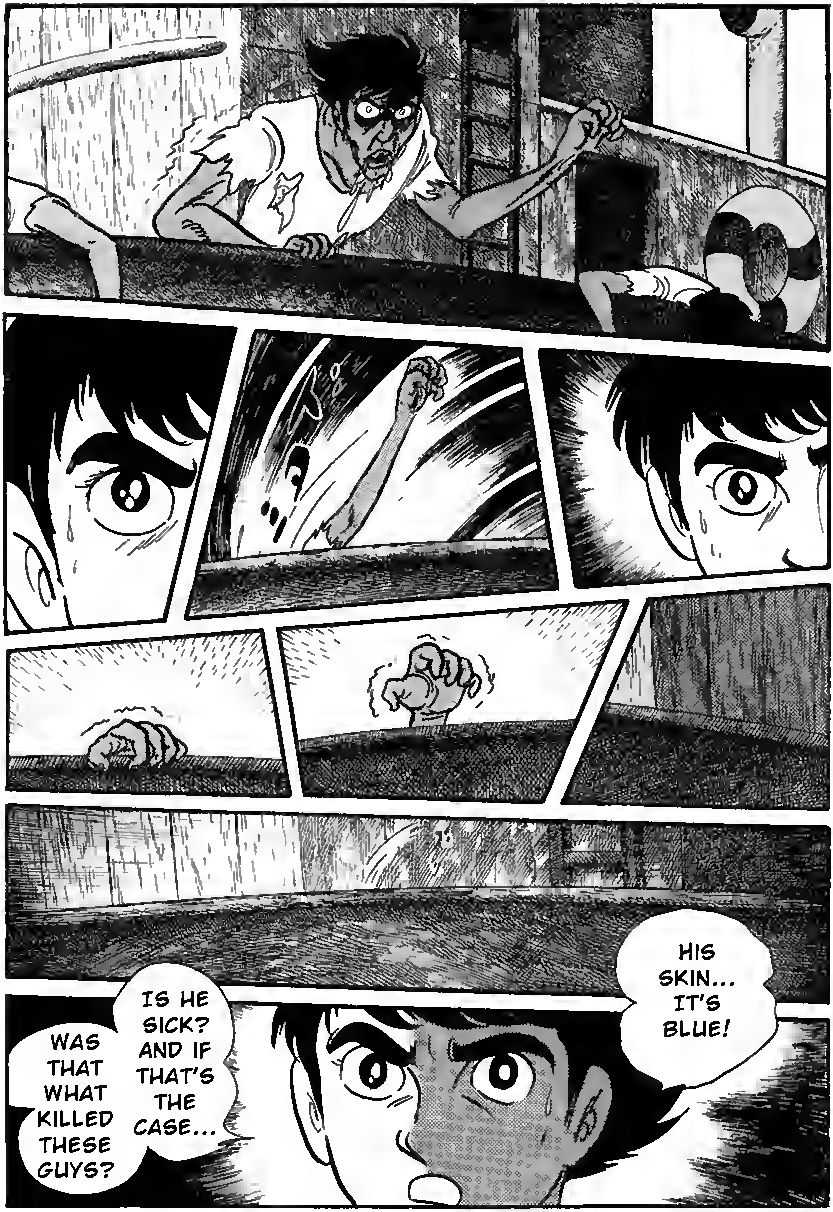

HEY! OVER THERE!
AH!
IT'S A BOAT!

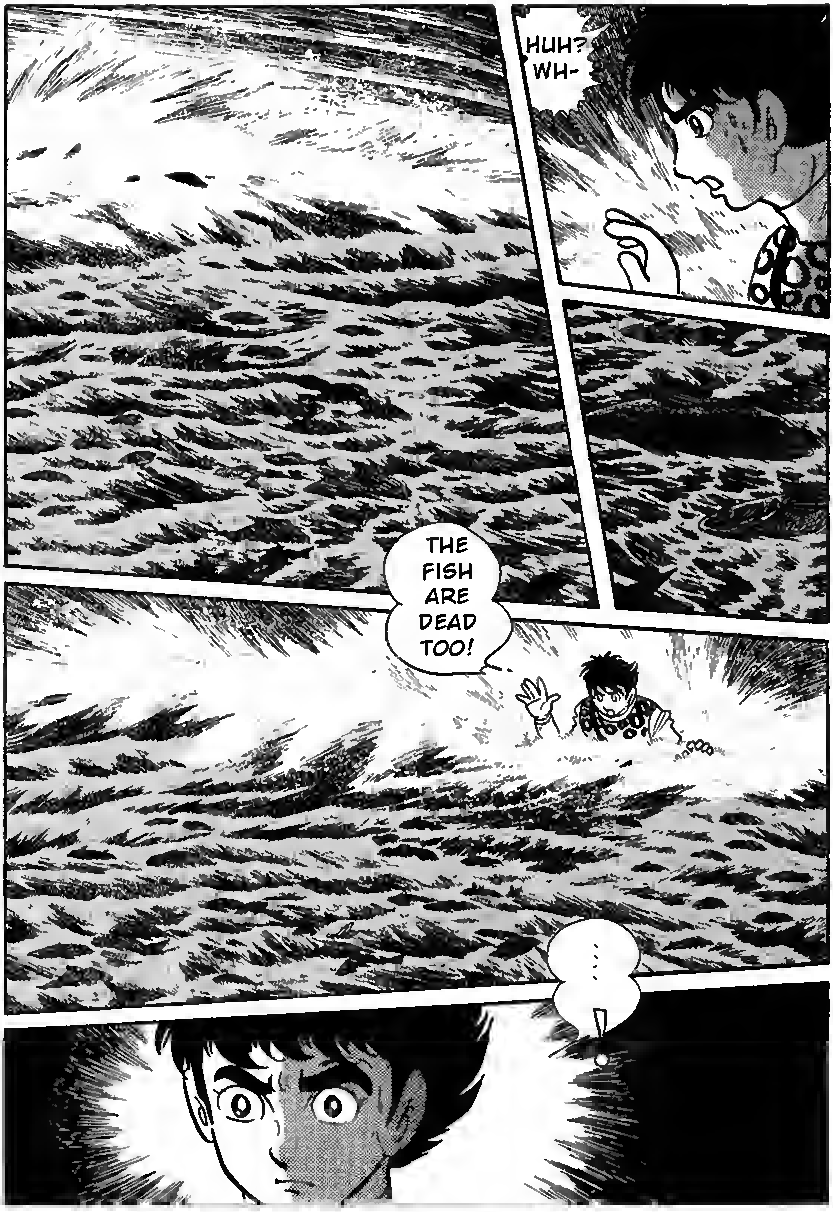

IT LOOKS LIKE A FISHING BOAT!

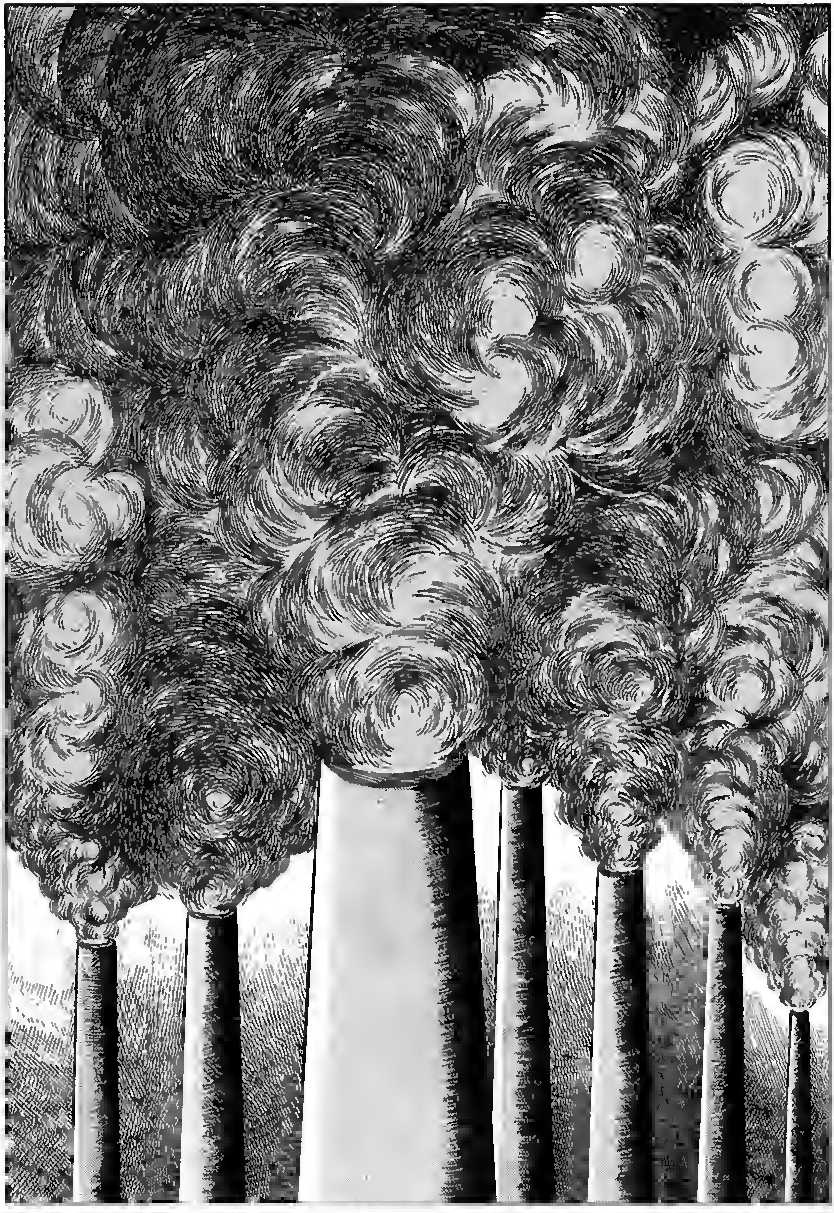

THAT'S NOT GOOD.
I CAN'T SEE ANYONE ON BOARD.
WHAT THE...?

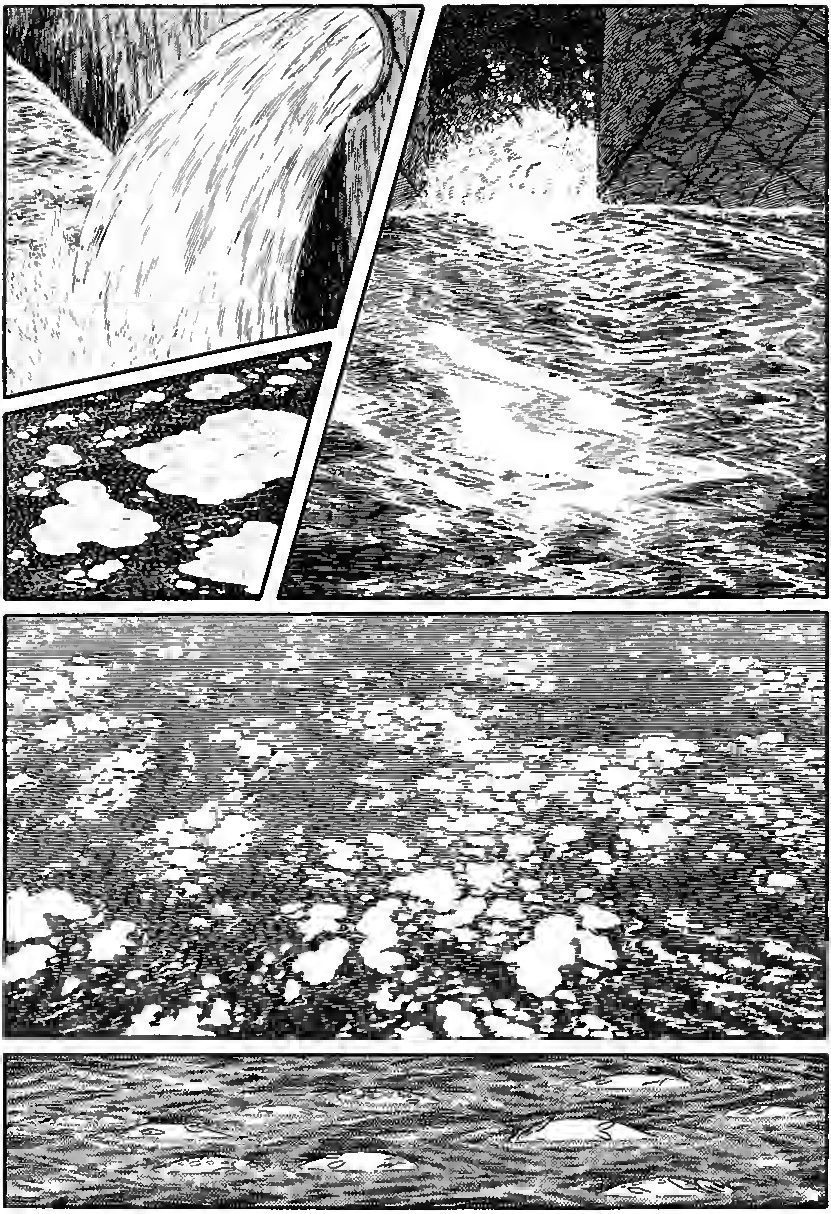

HOLY COW! ARE THEY ALL DEAD?
. . . .

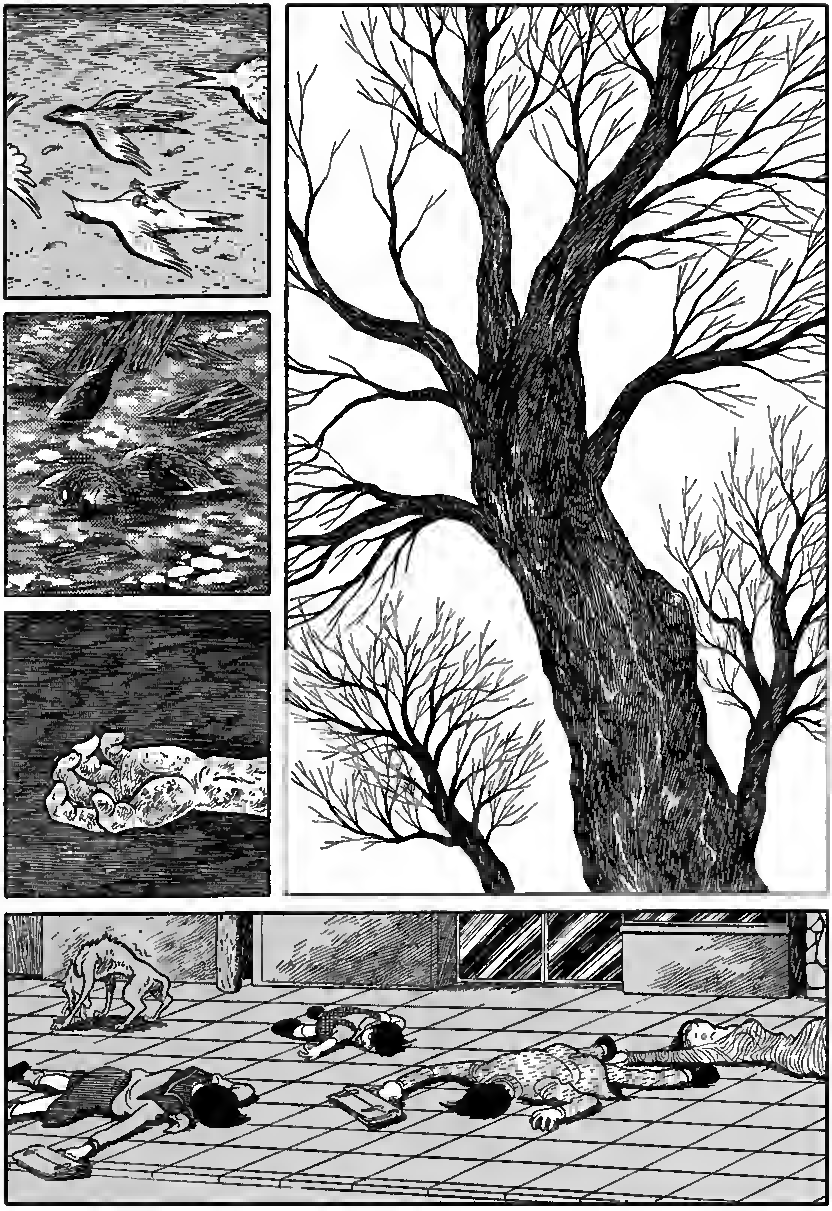

NO! ONE OF THEM'S STILL ALIVE!

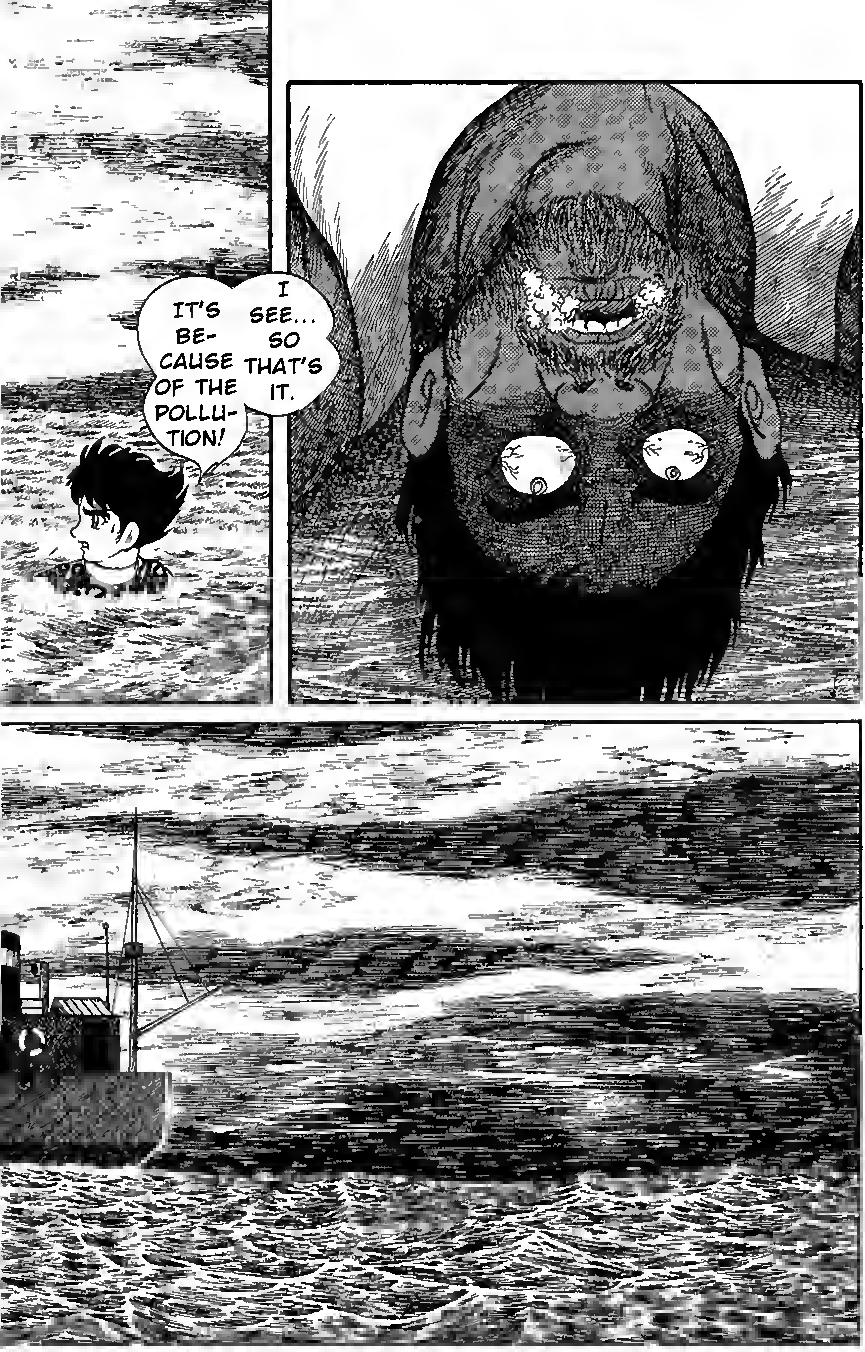

HIS SKIN... IT'S BLUE!
IS HE SICK? AND IF THAT'S THE CASE...
WAS THAT WHAT KILLED THESE GUYS?

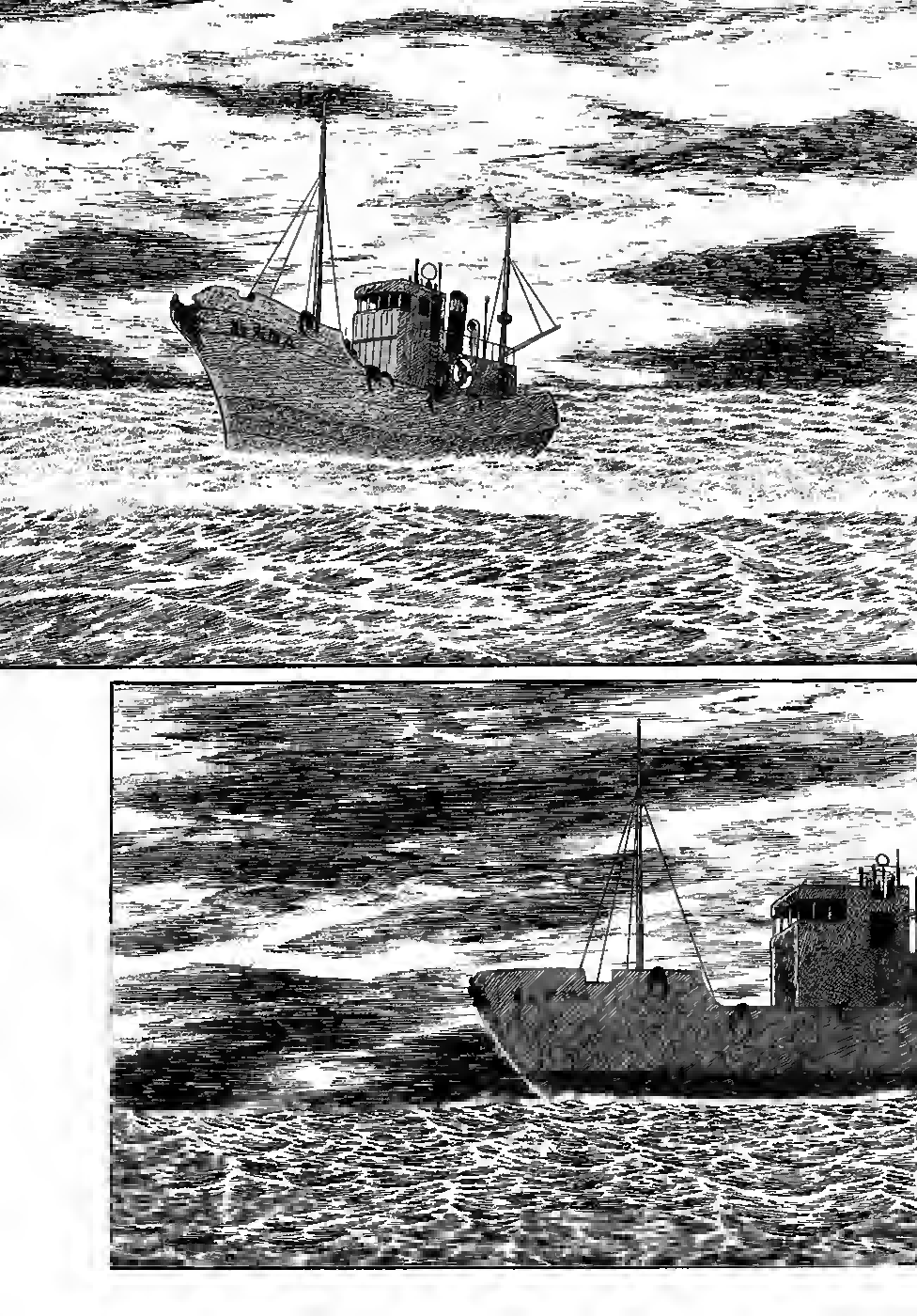

HUH? WH-
THE FISH ARE DEAD TOO!
...!



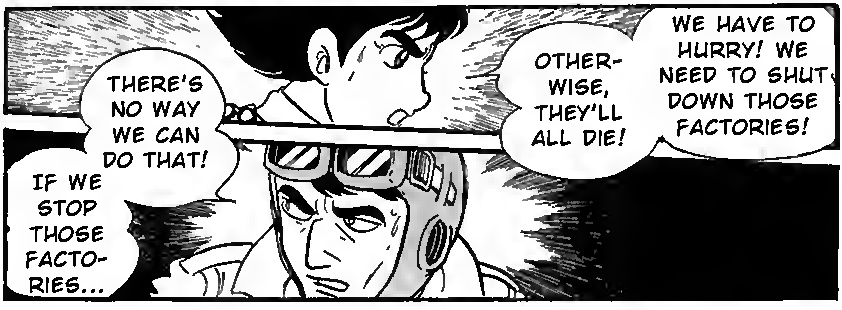





IT'S BE-CAUSE OF THE POLLU-TION!
I SEE... SO THAT'S IT.

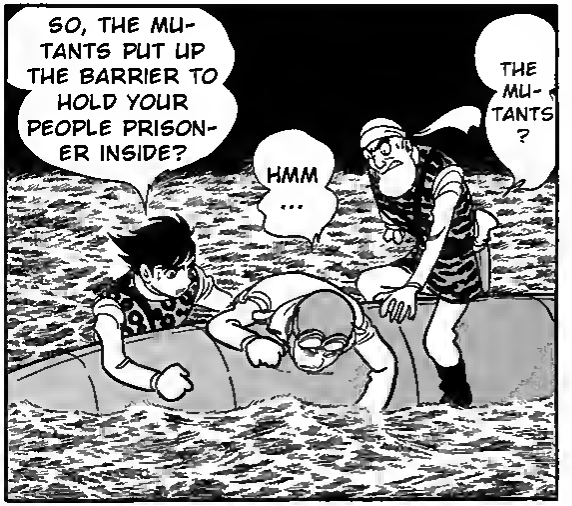


THE PEOPLE OF YOUR ISLAND...
THEY'RE SUFFOCATING UNDER ALL THE POLLUTION!

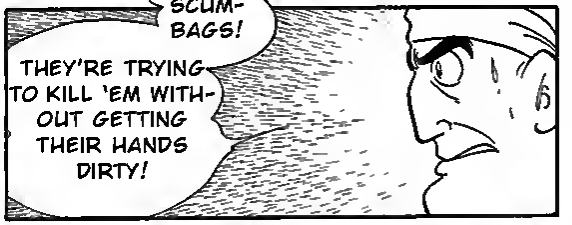

WE HAVE TO HURRY! WE NEED TO SHUT DOWN THOSE FACTORIES!
OTHERWISE, THEY'LL ALL DIE!
THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN DO THAT!
IF WE STOP THOSE FACTORIES...

...IF IT WEREN'T FOR THOSE FACTORIES CONSTANTLY PRODUCING FOOD, CLOTHES, HOMES AND ALL OUR OTHER NECESSITIES...
THERE ARE 900,000 OF US ON THIS ISLAND. WE'D NEVER BE ABLE TO FEED THEM ALL...
WE'LL DIE OF STARVATION!
IF THE GOVERNMENT DECIDES TO COLONIZE OTHER LANDS, IT'S TO LESSEN THE BURDEN OF OVERPOPULATION!
IN THE BEGINNING... IT ALL WENT SO WELL...
WE WERE ABLE TO DOMINATE THE PRIMITIVES WITH LITTLE RESISTANCE...
...GIVEN THE WEAPONS WE HAD.
IT WAS AFTER THAT...
...WHEN WE MET THEM.
MY GOD... THEM...

HUH? WHAT IS...?

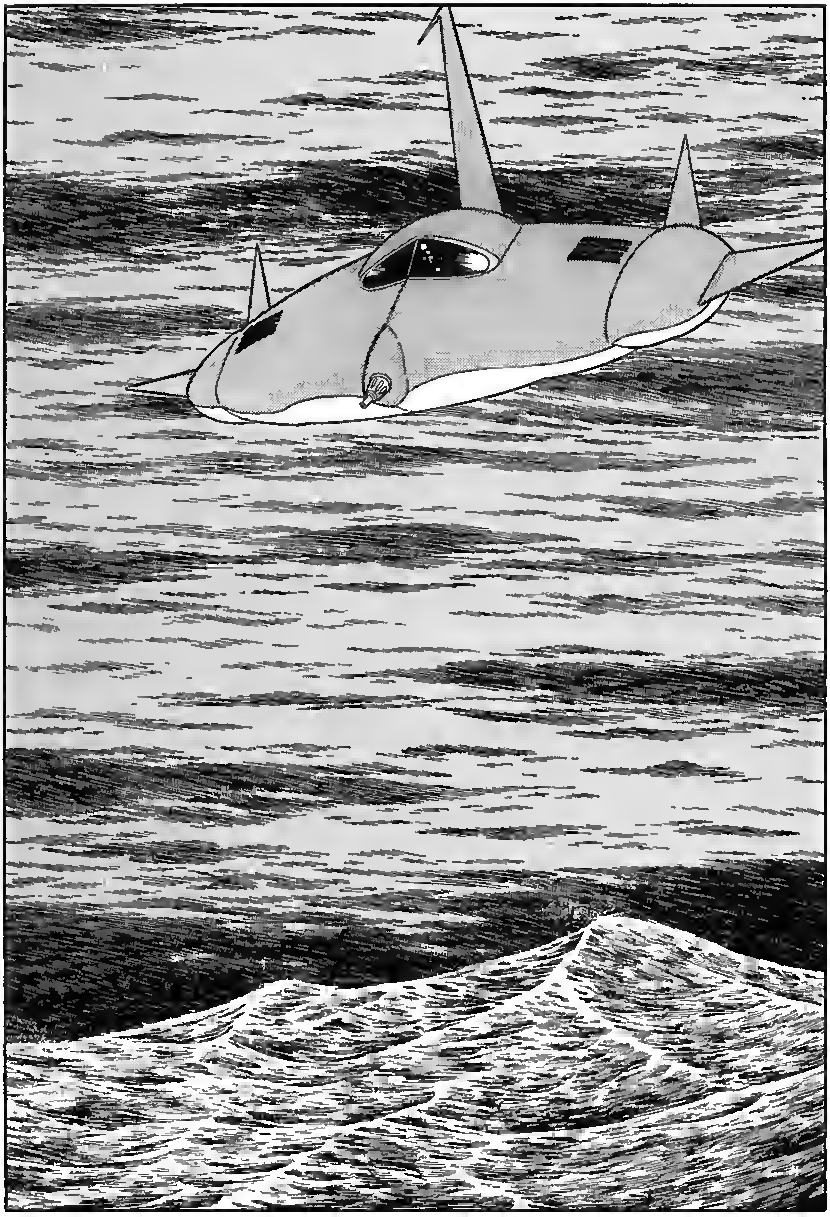

SO, THE MUTANTS PUT UP THE BARRIER TO HOLD YOUR PEOPLE PRISONER INSIDE?
HMM ...
THE MUTANTS?

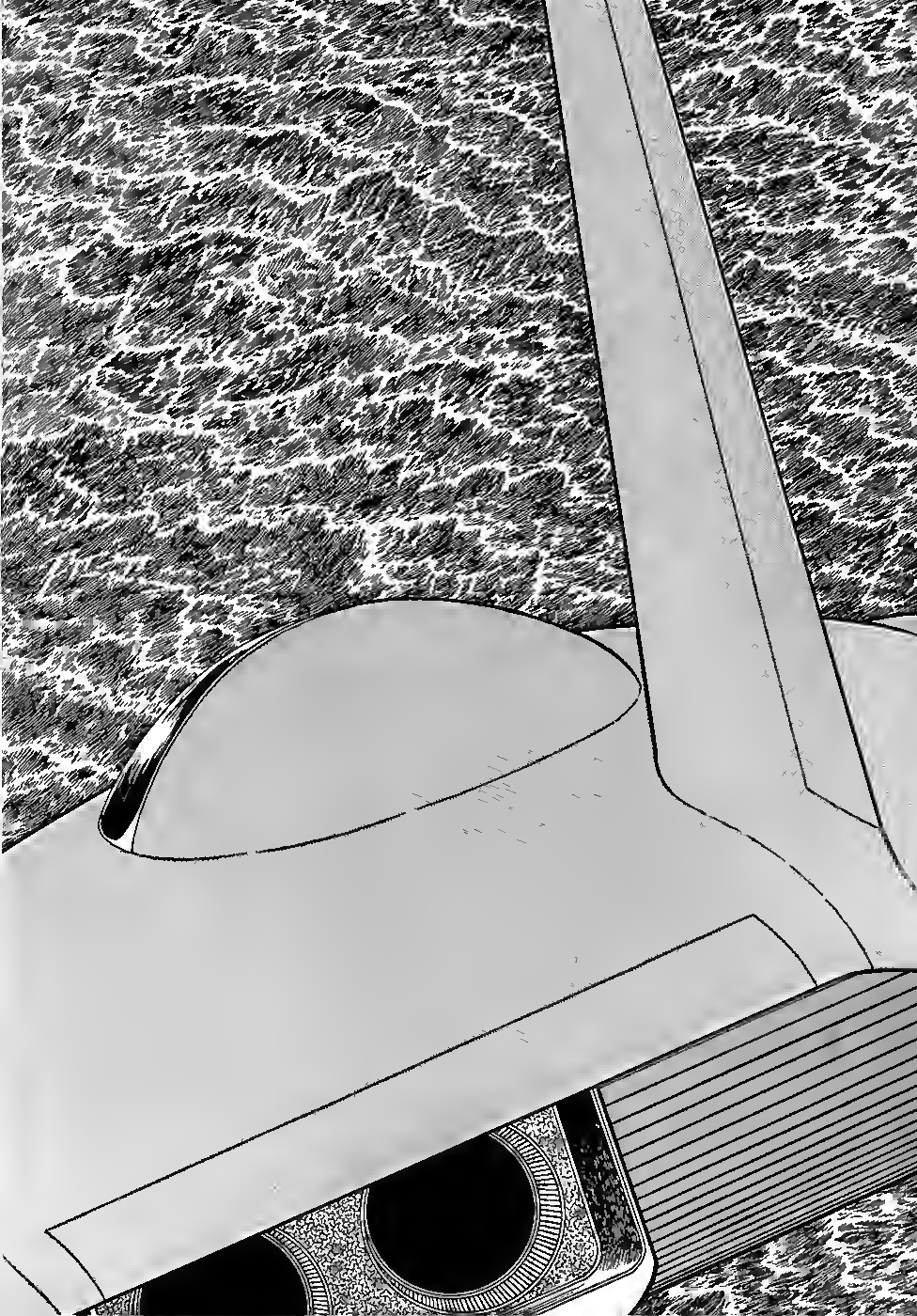
...UNTIL THEY WERE ALL DEAD!
THEY SUFFOCATED THEM WITH SMOG, WASTE WATER AND THOSE OTHER TOXINS...


BUNCHA SCUMBAGS!
THEY'RE TRYING TO KILL 'EM WITHOUT GETTING THEIR HANDS DIRTY!

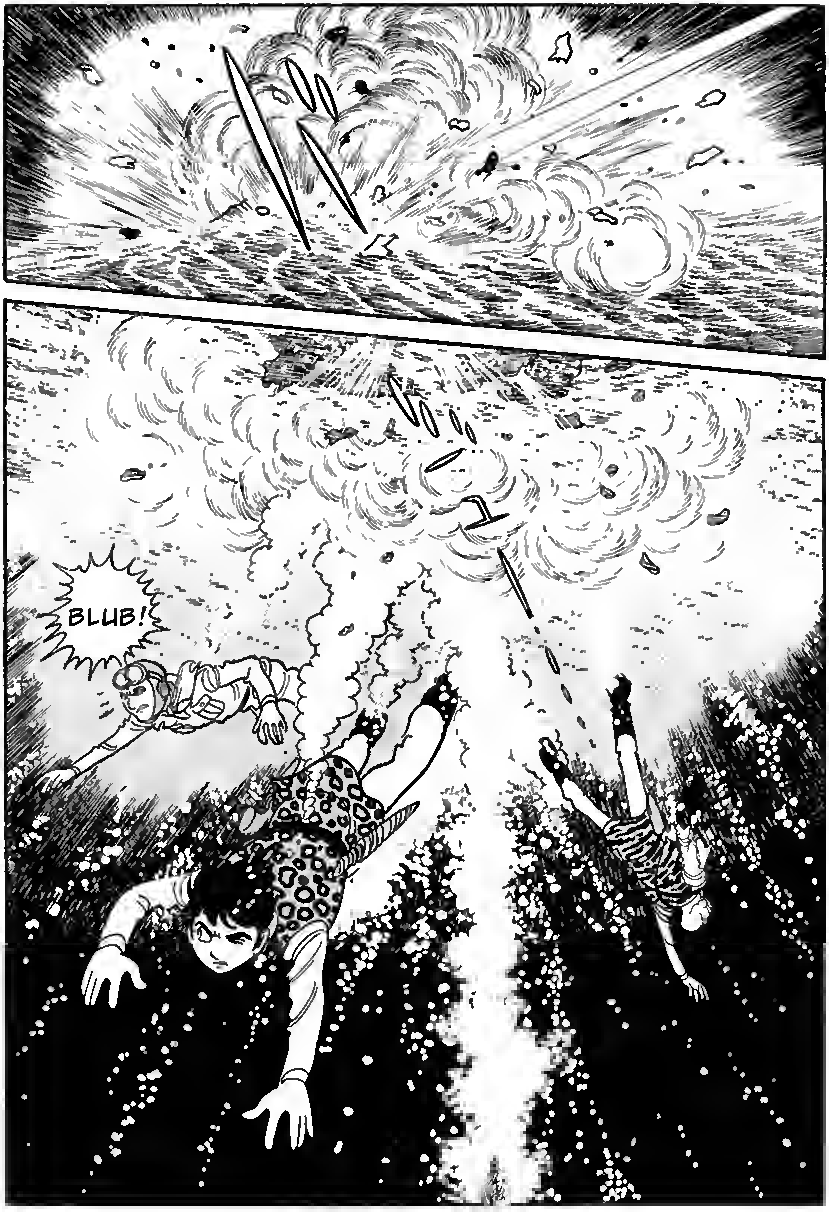
I WOULDN'T PUT IT PAST THEM.
THEY'RE COLD, RUTHLESS AND WITHOUT PITY!

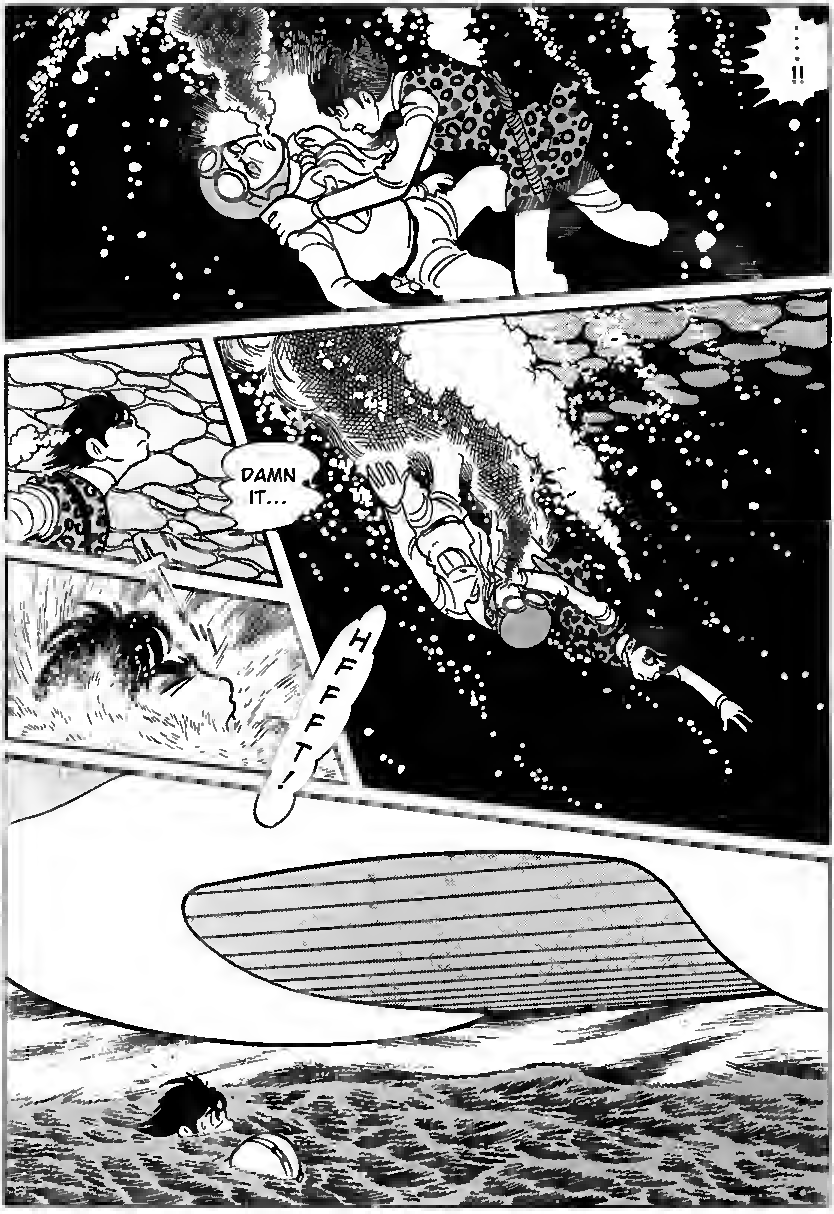
I-
IT'S...
...ONE OF THEIR HUNTER PLANES!



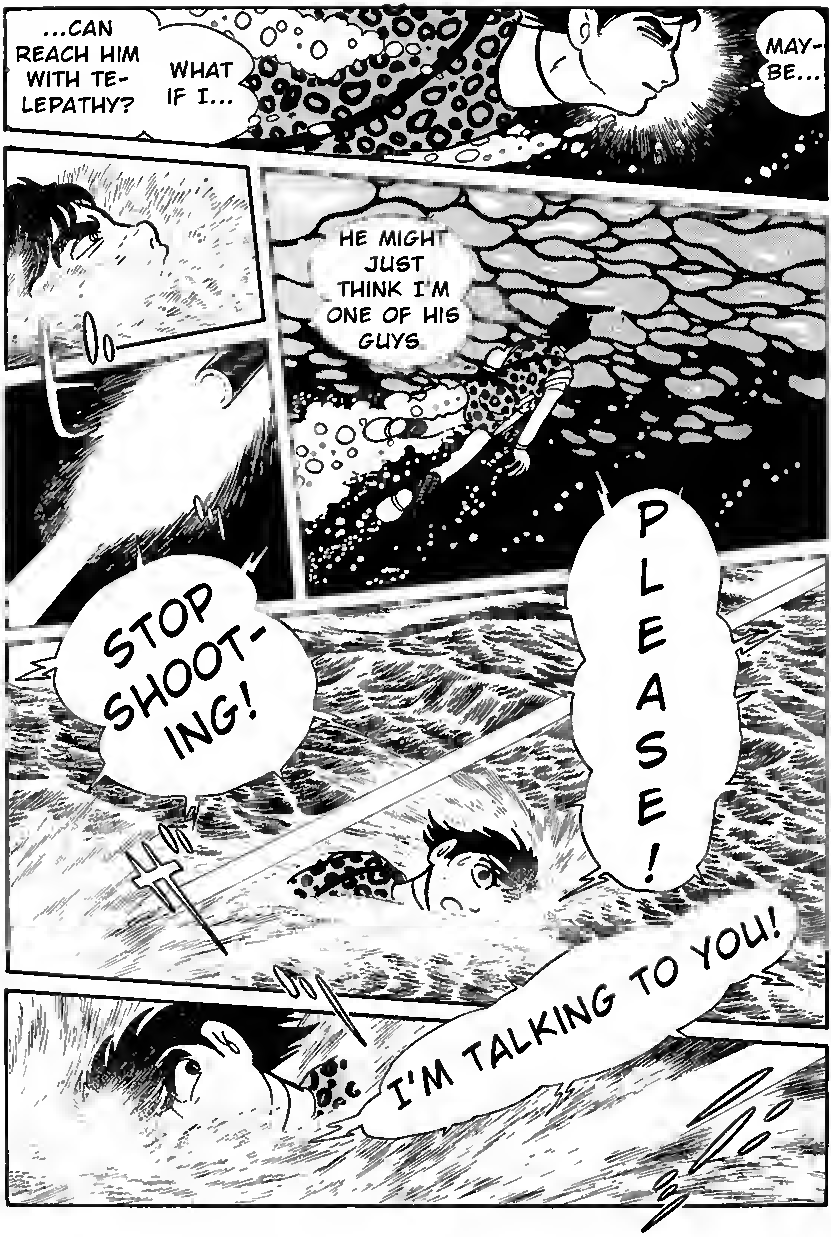


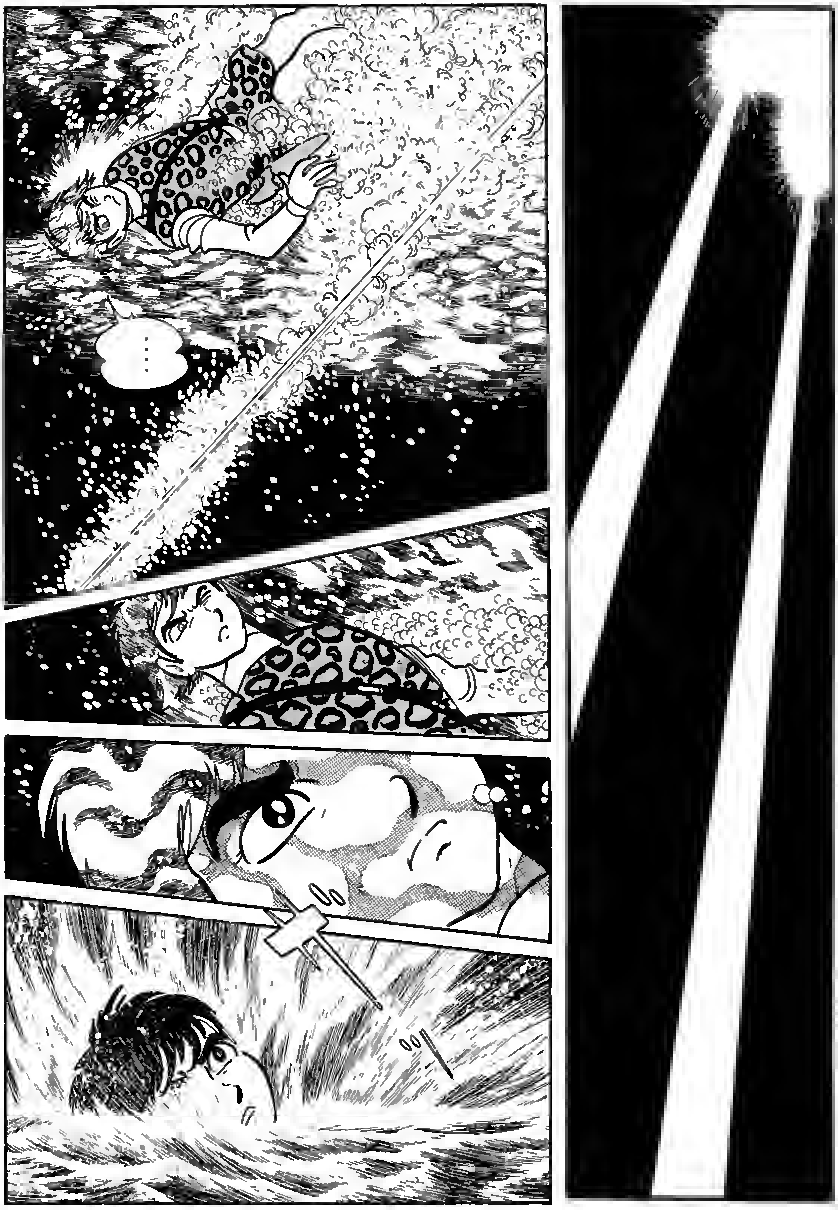
WATCH OUT!
IN THE WATER!

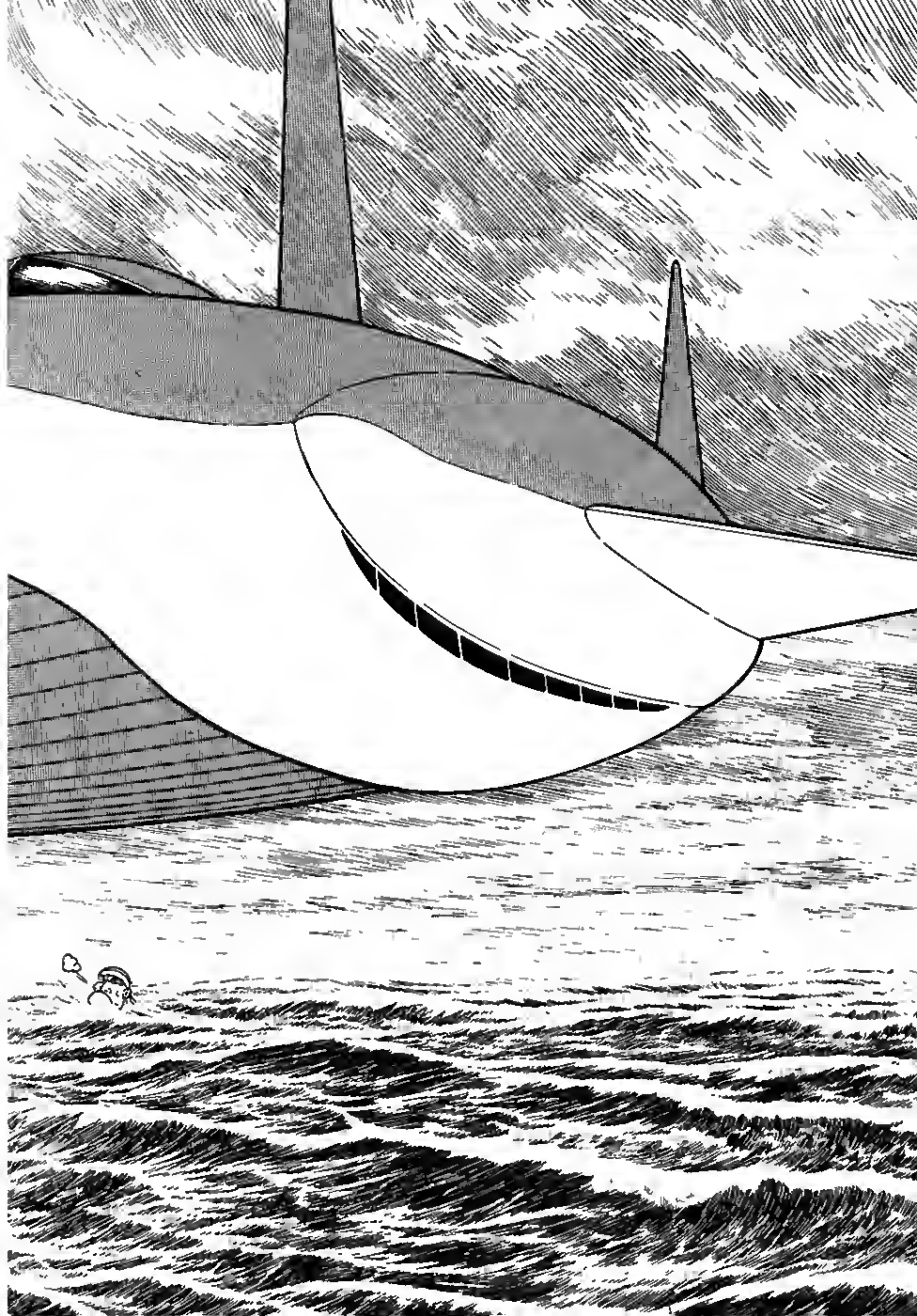

BLUB!

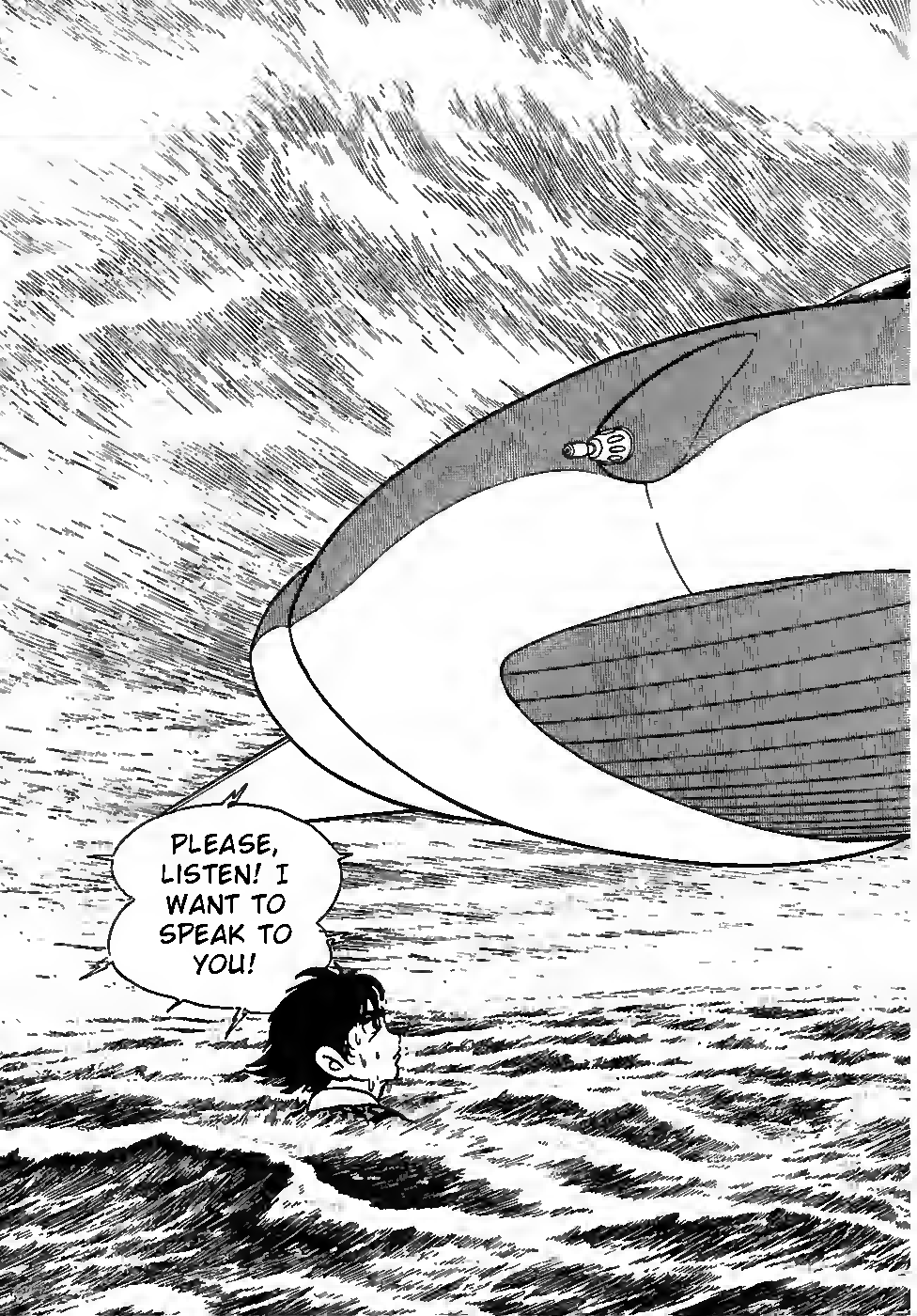

!!
DAMN IT...
HEEFFT!

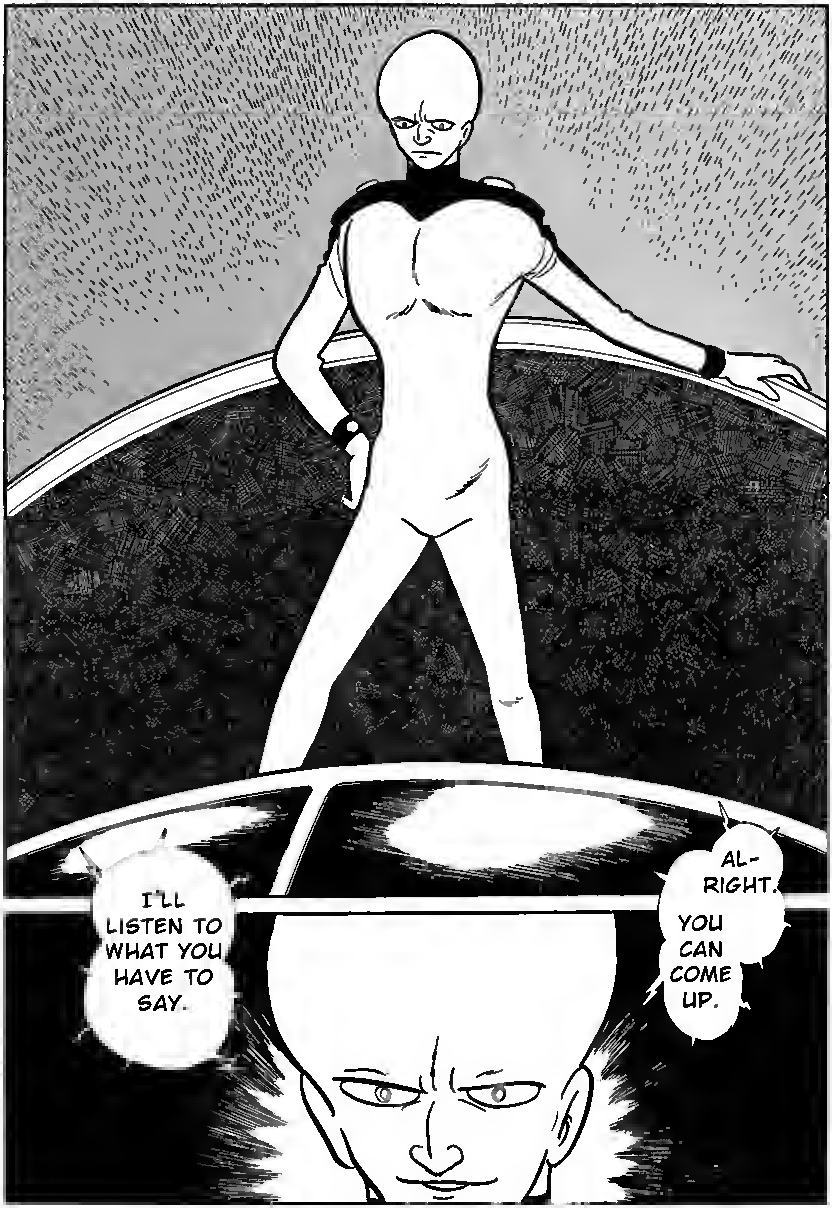
OH, CRAP!
HE'S TRYING TO KILL US!
GOTTA THINK OF SOME-THING...

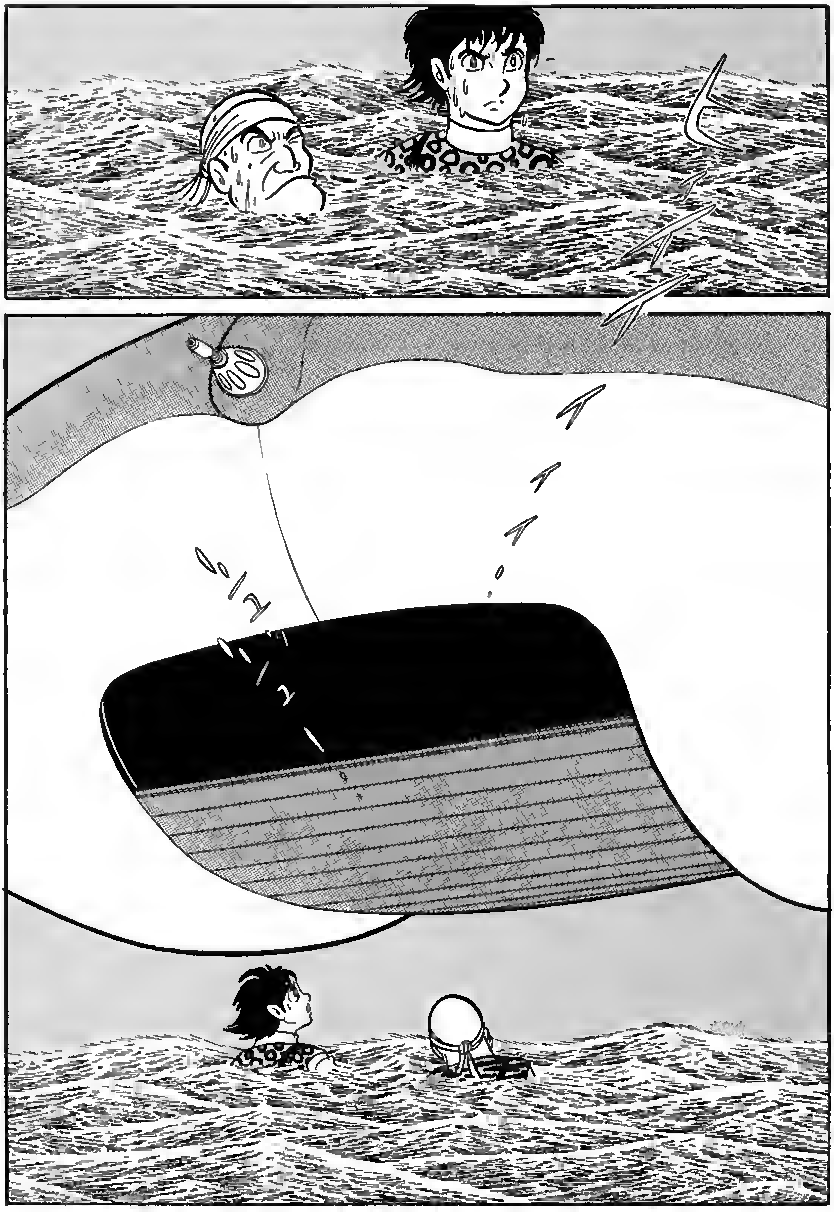

...CAN REACH HIM WITH TELEPATHY?
WHAT IF I...
MAYBE...
HE MIGHT JUST THINK I'M ONE OF HIS GUYS
STOP SHOOTING!
PLEASE!
I'M TALKING TO YOU!

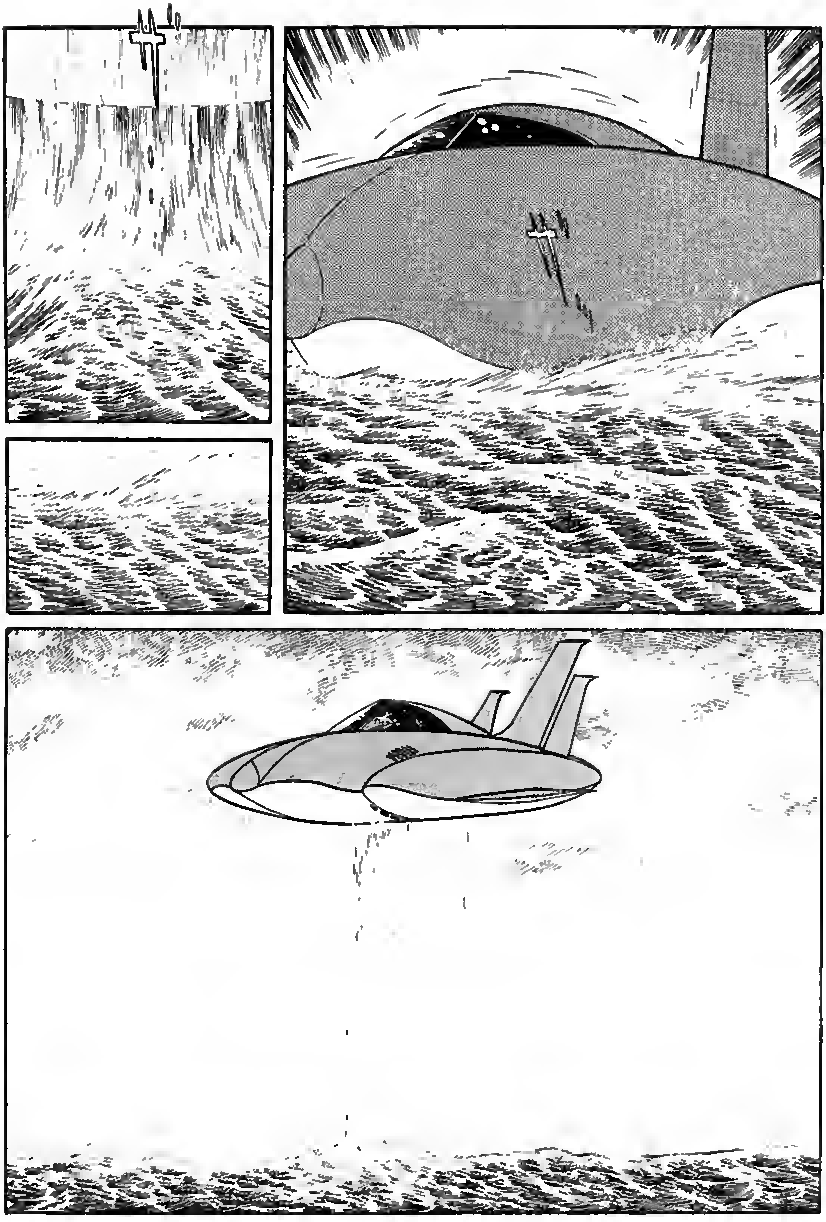


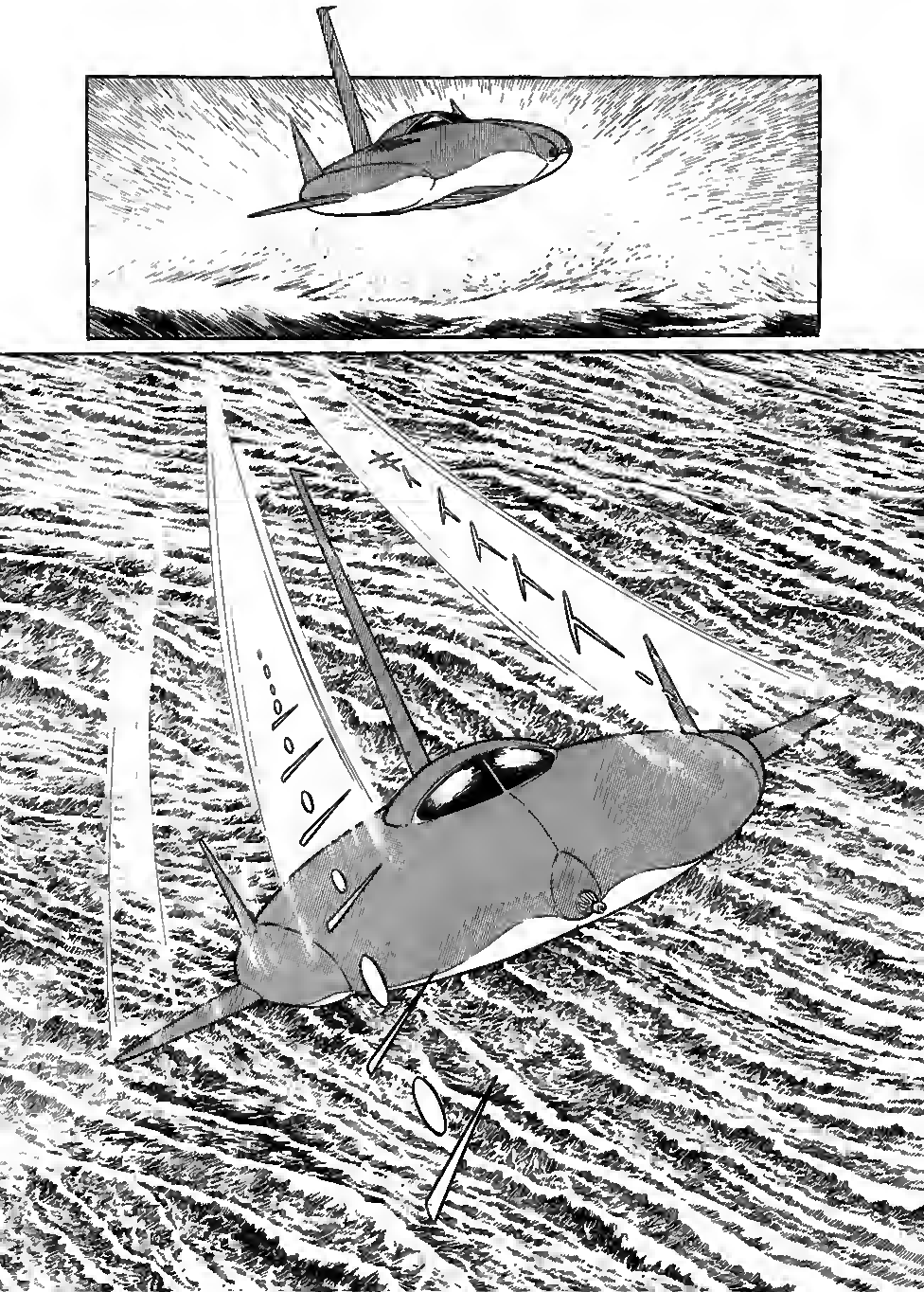


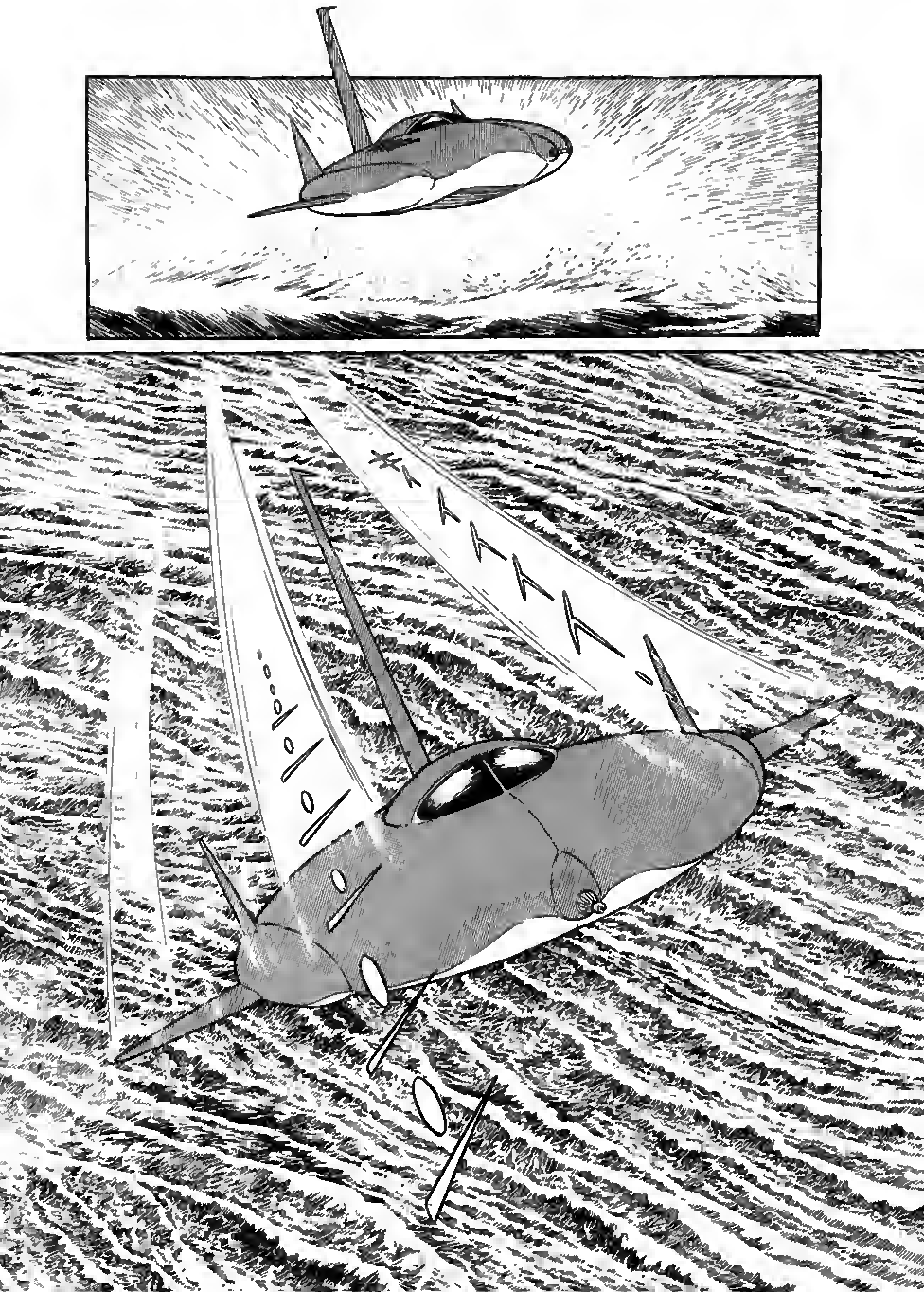

PLEASE, LISTEN! I WANT TO SPEAK TO YOU!

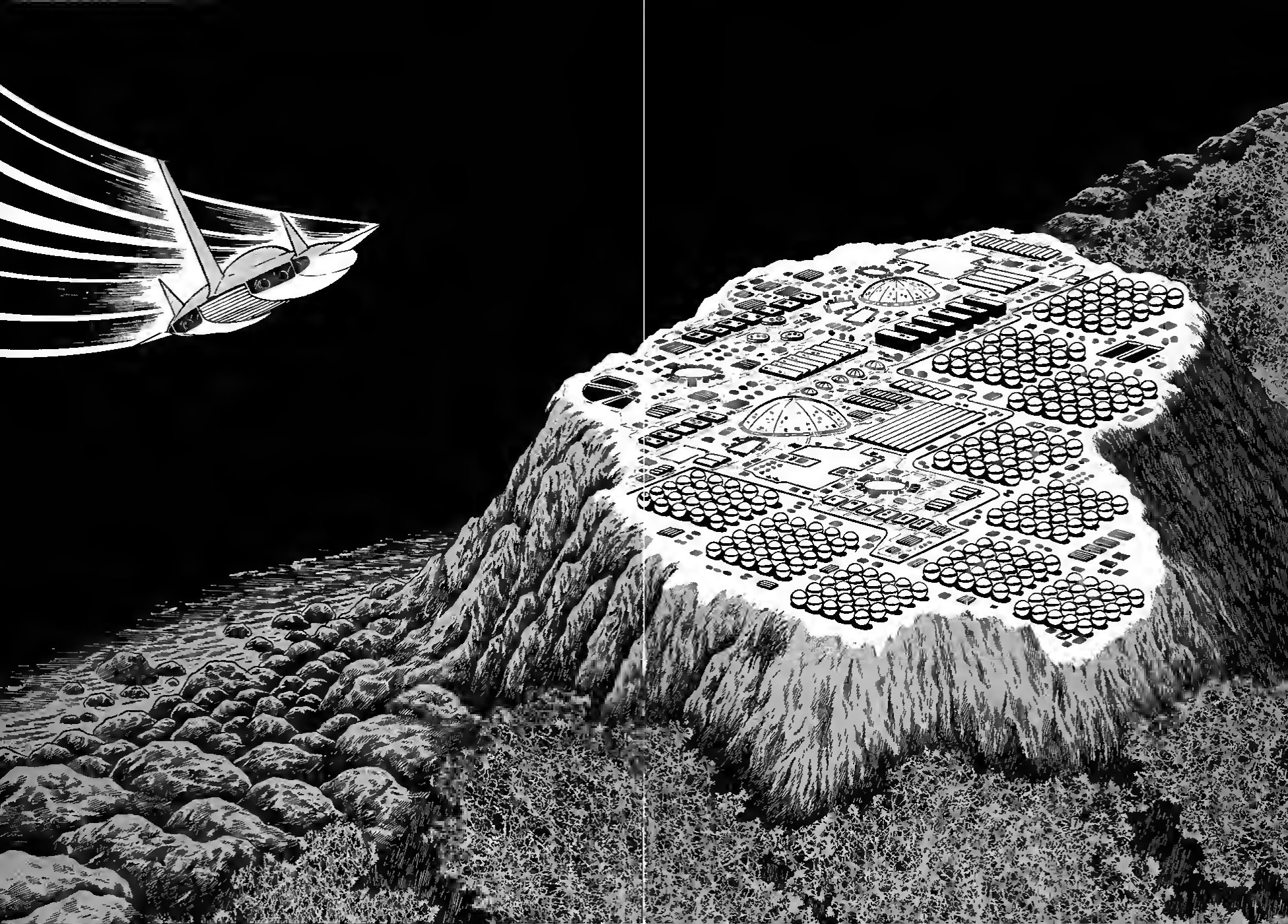

AL-
RIGHT.
YOU
CAN
COME
UP.
I'LL
LISTEN TO
WHAT YOU
HAVE TO
SAY.

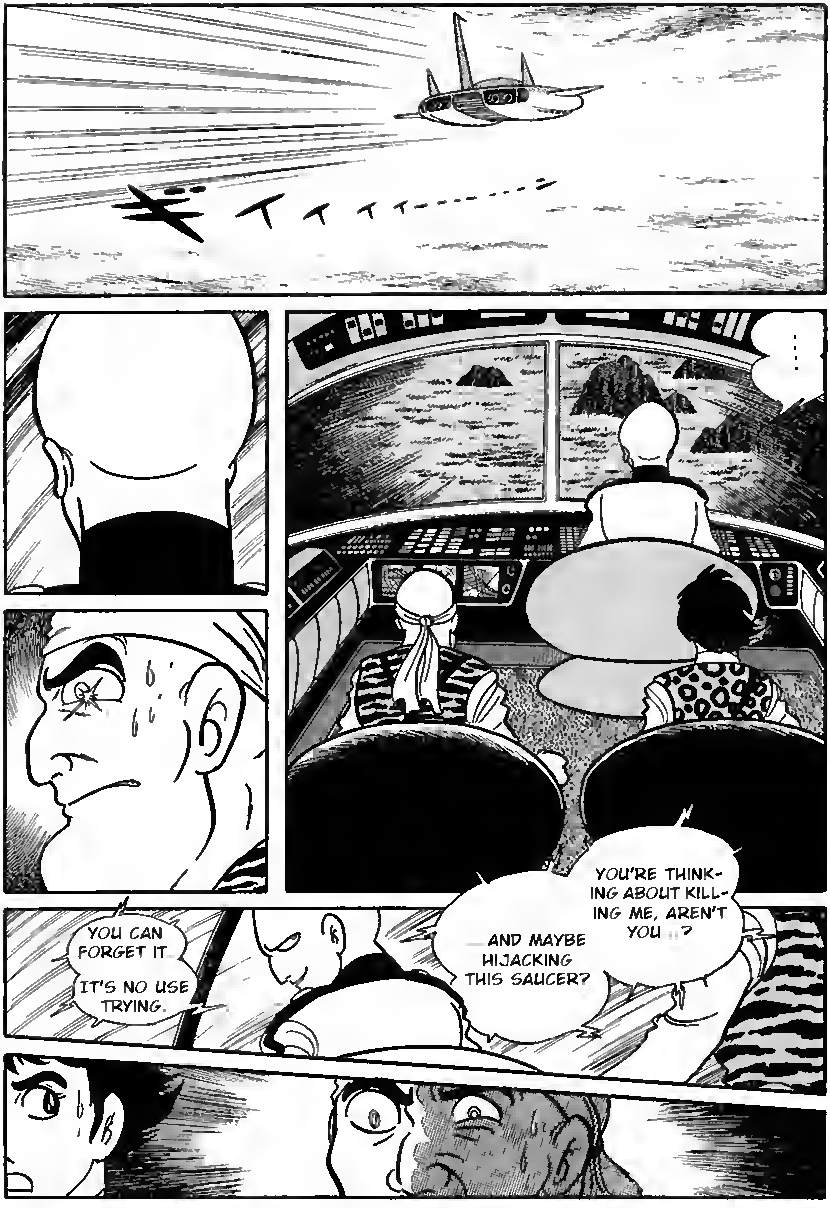


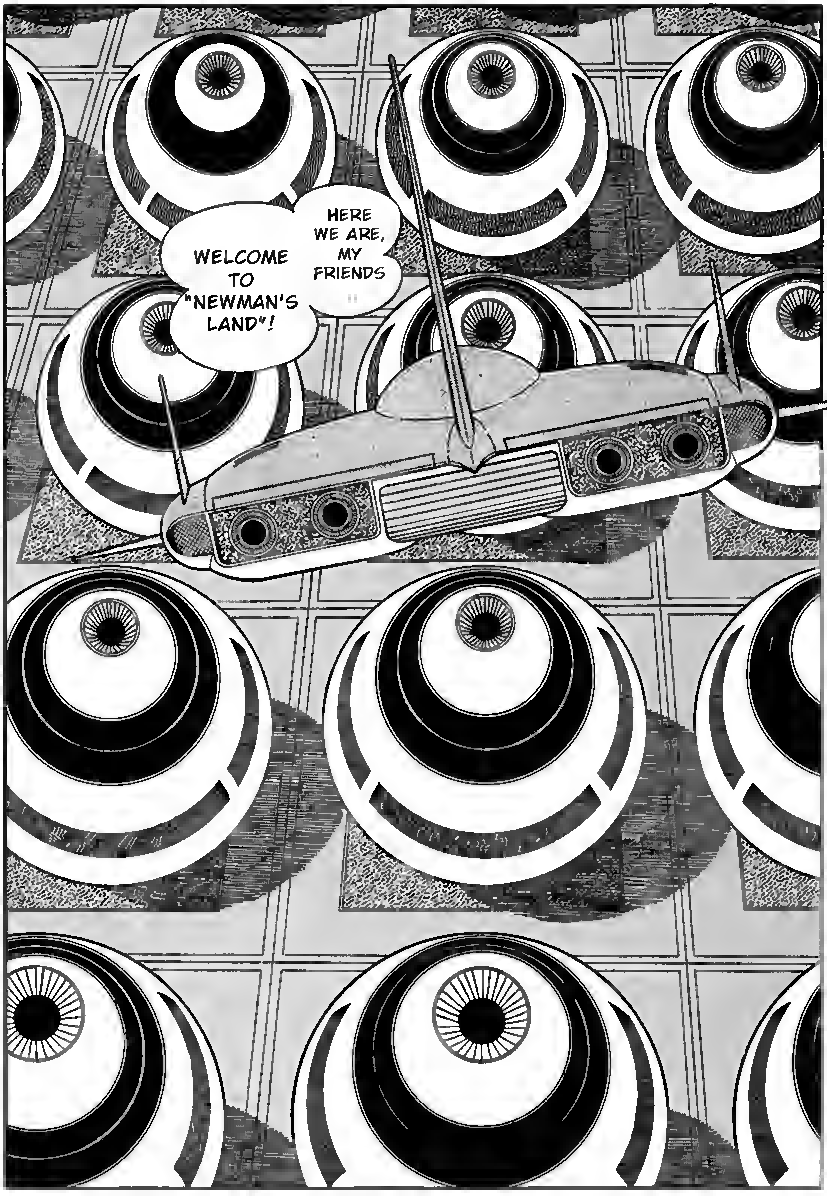


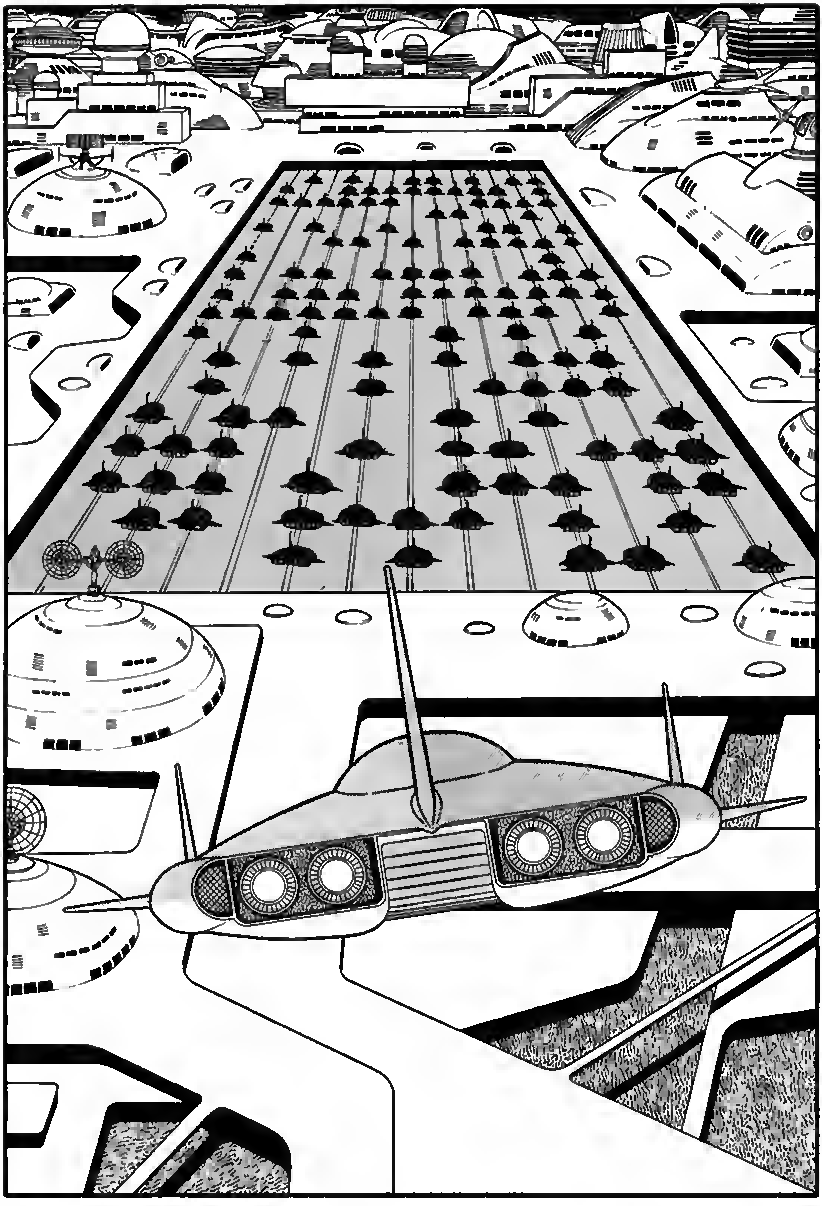


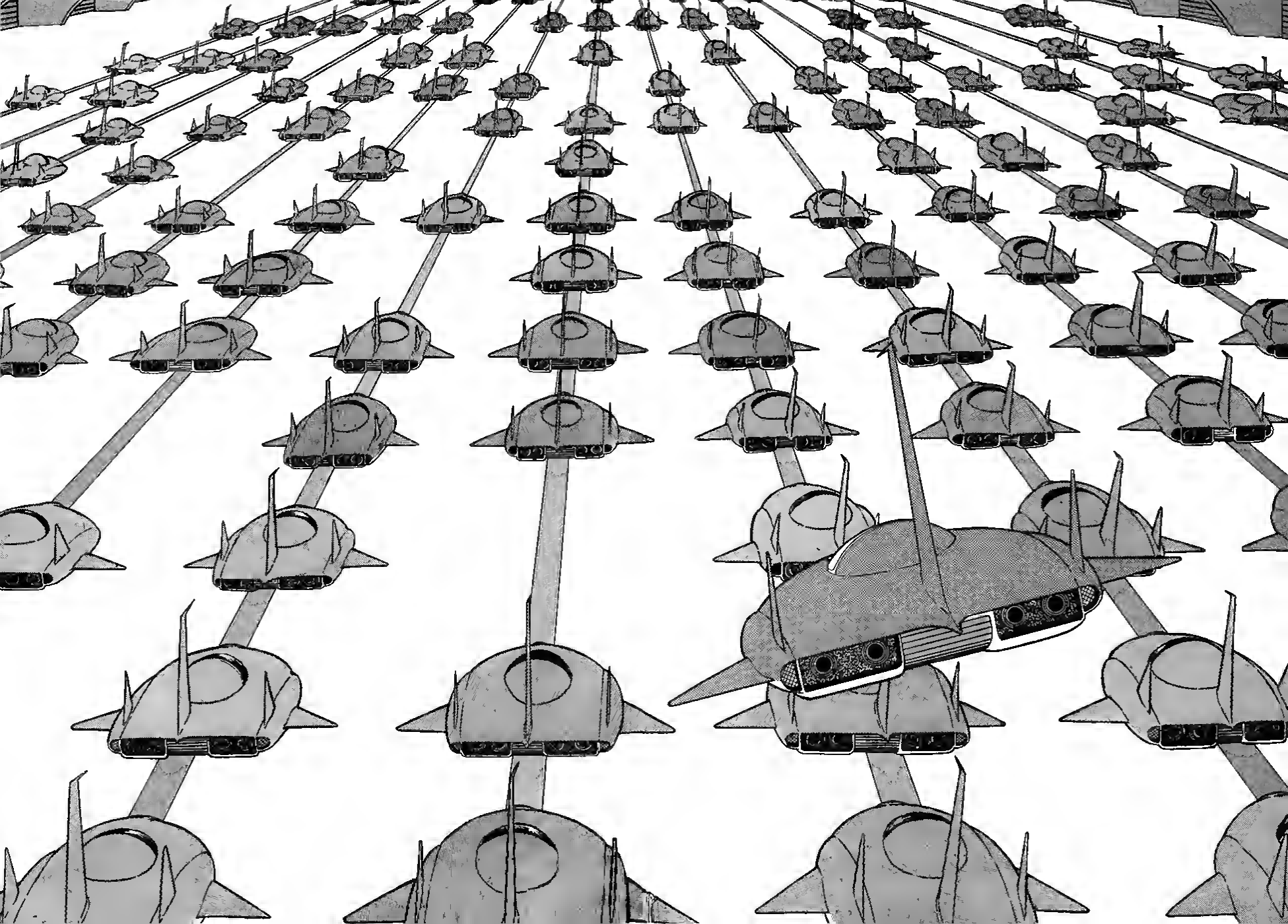


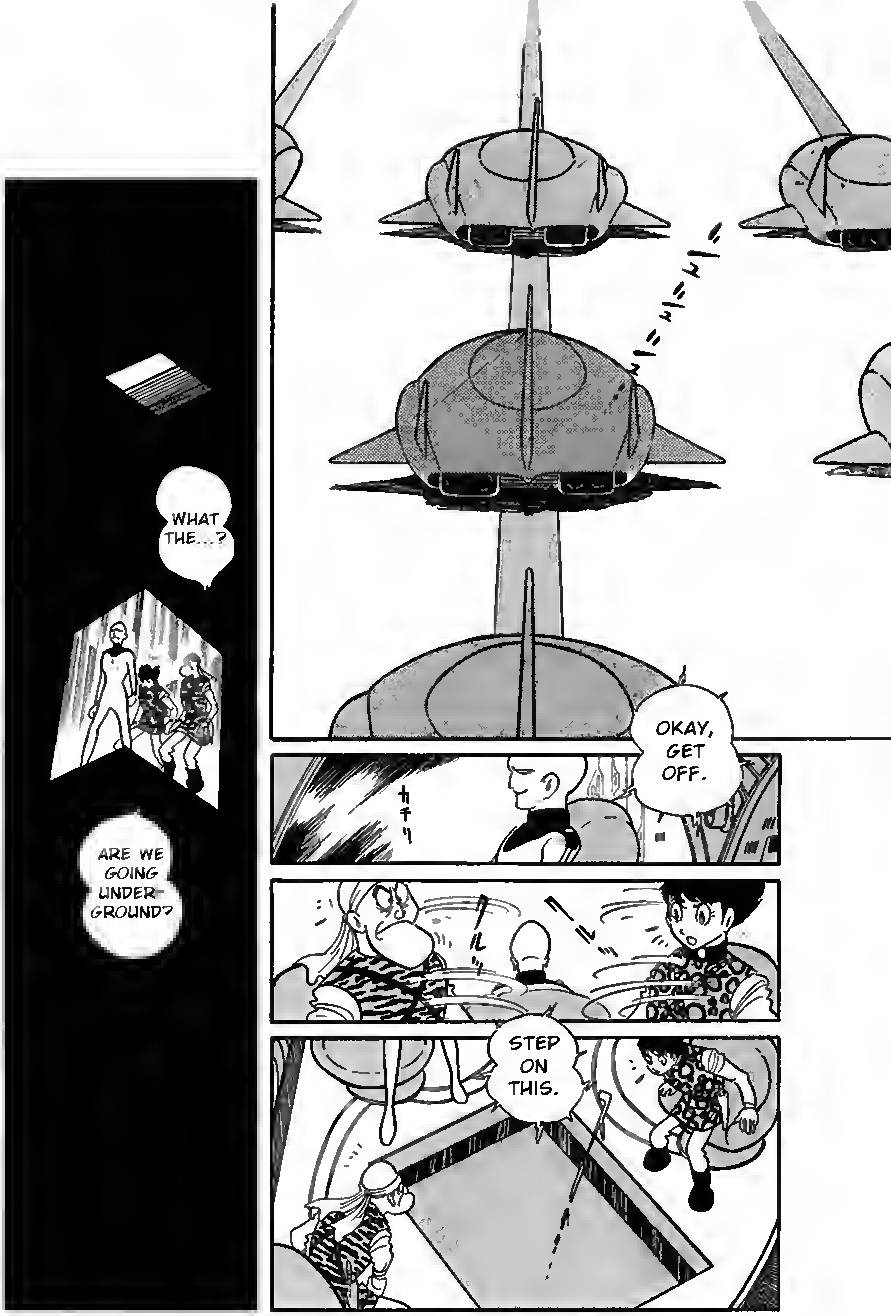


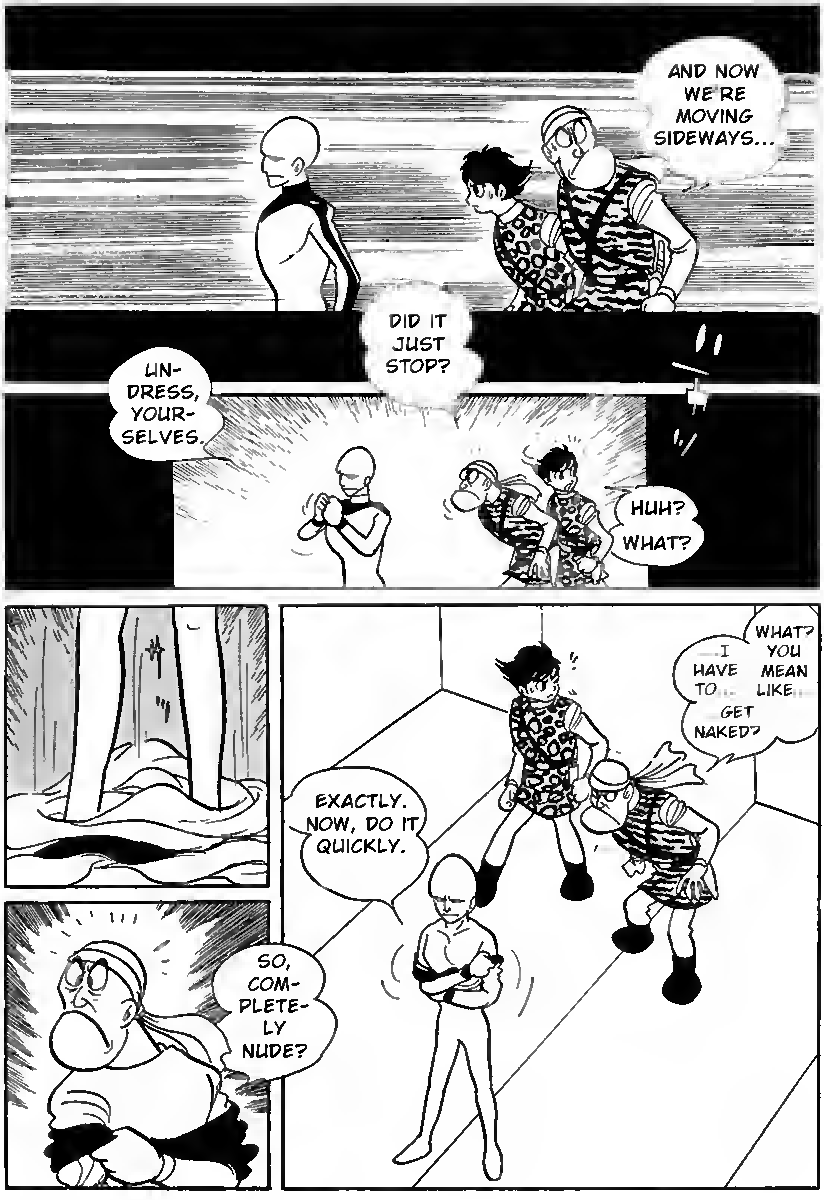

YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT KILLING ME, AREN'T YOU...?
AND MAYBE HIJACKING THIS SAUCER?
YOU CAN FORGET IT
IT'S NO USE TRYING.

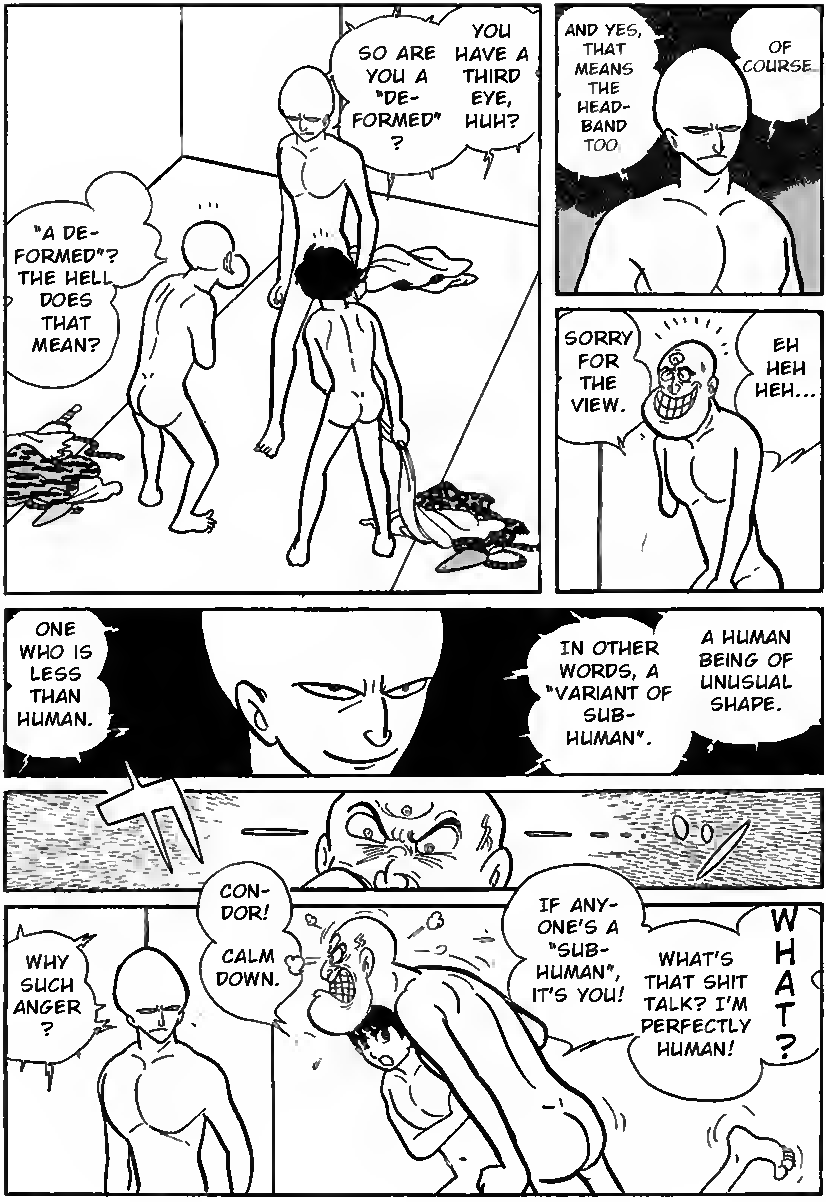

WELCOME TO "NEWMAN'S LAND"!
HERE WE ARE, MY FRIENDS

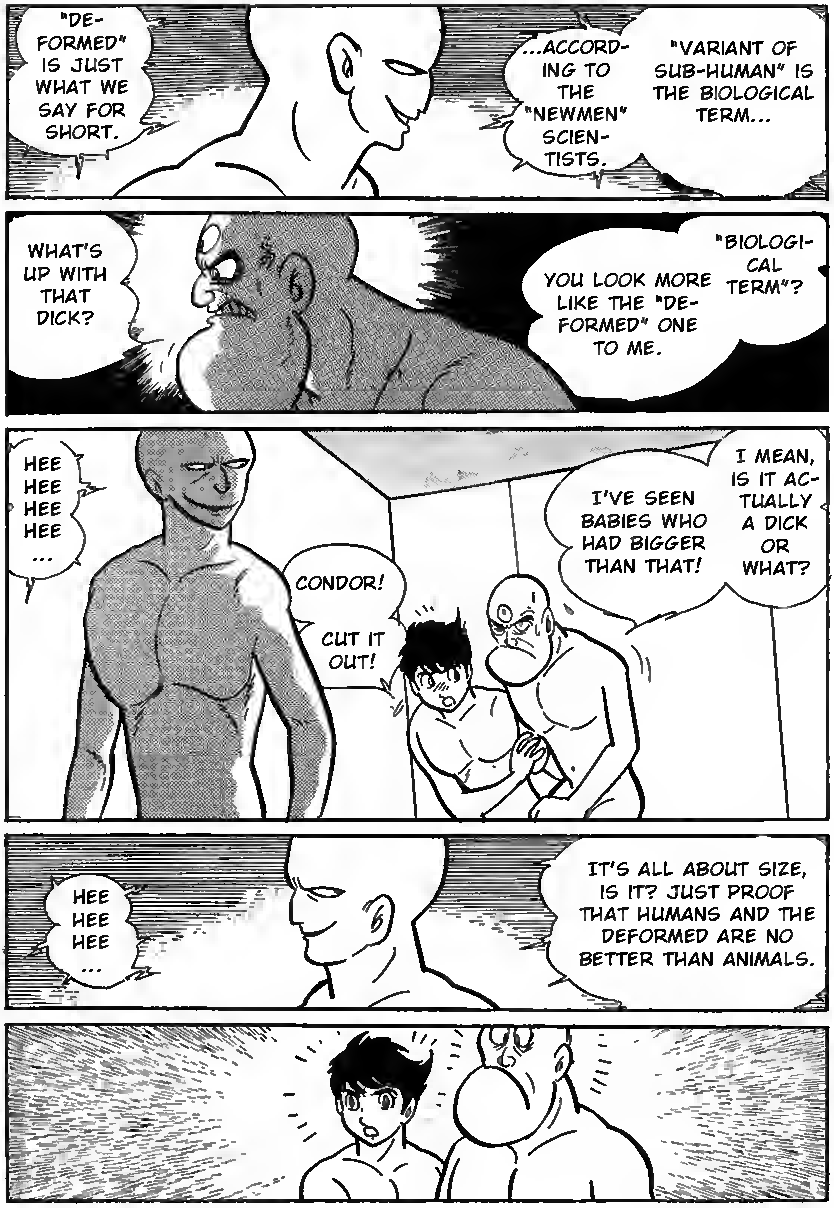


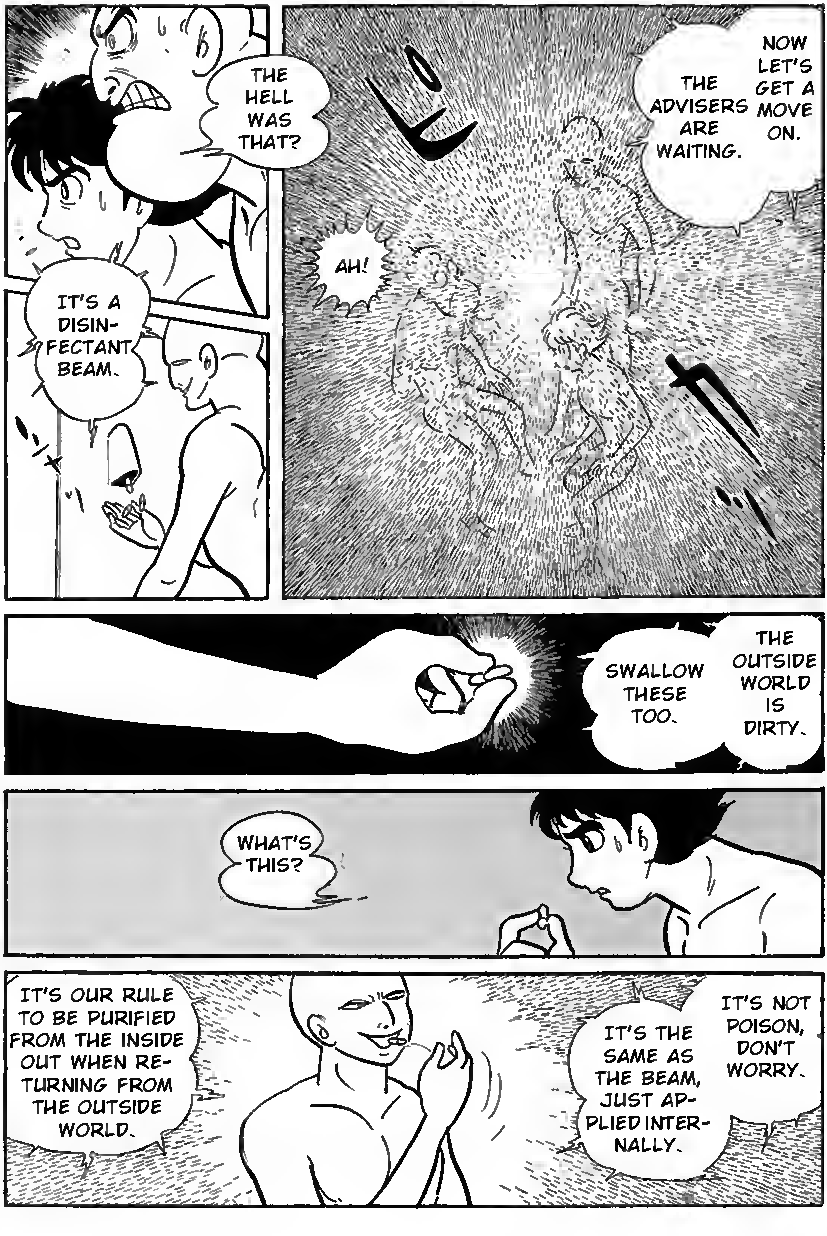



WHAT THE...?
ARE WE GOING UNDER-GROUND?
OKAY, GET OFF.
STEP ON THIS.

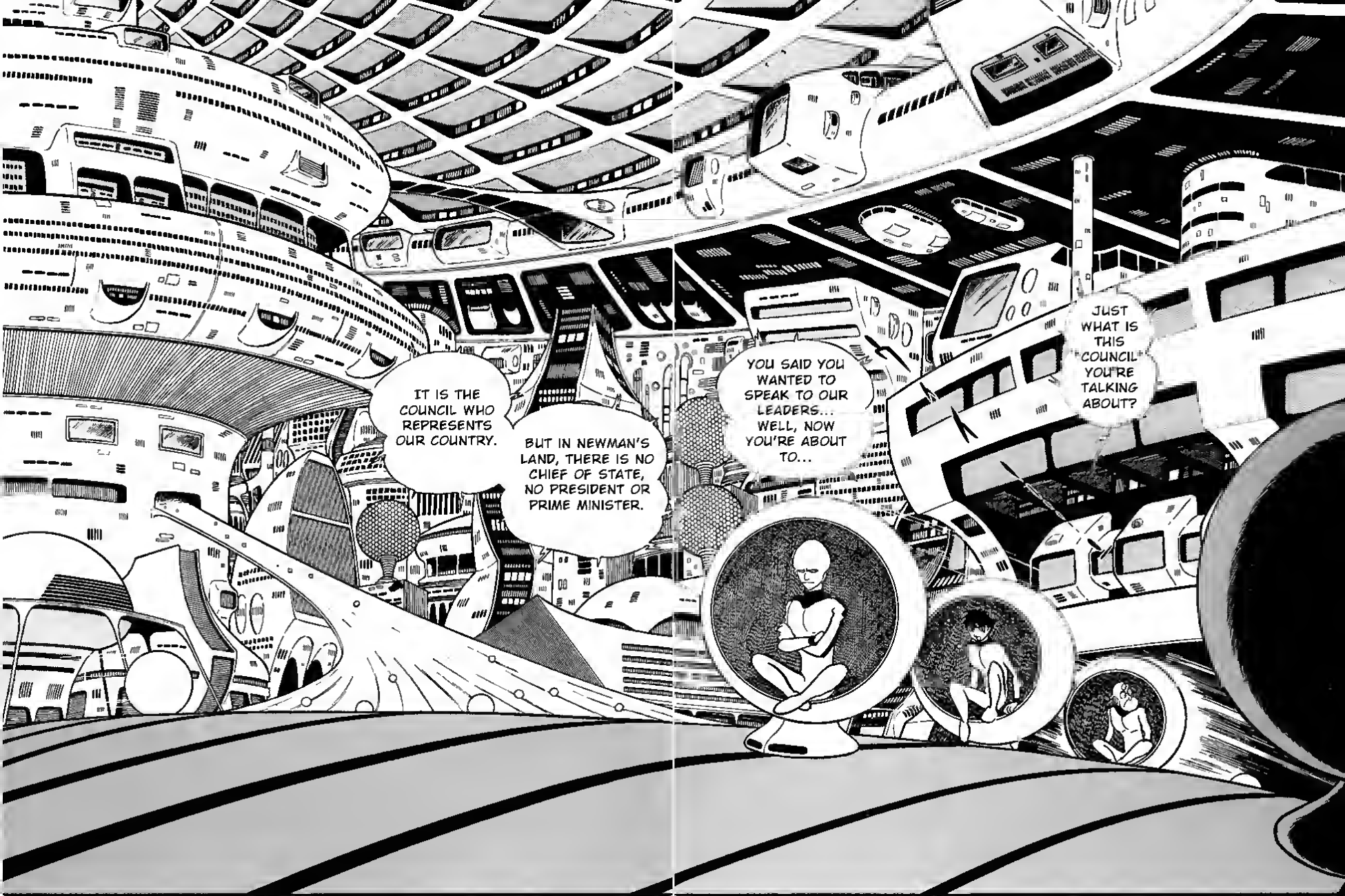

AND NOW WE'RE MOVING SIDEWAYS...
DID IT JUST STOP?
UN-DRESS, YOUR-SELVES.
HUH? WHAT?
WHAT? I HAVE TO... YOU MEAN LIKE... GET NAKED?
EXACTLY. NOW, DO IT QUICKLY.
SO, COM-PLETE-LY NUDE?

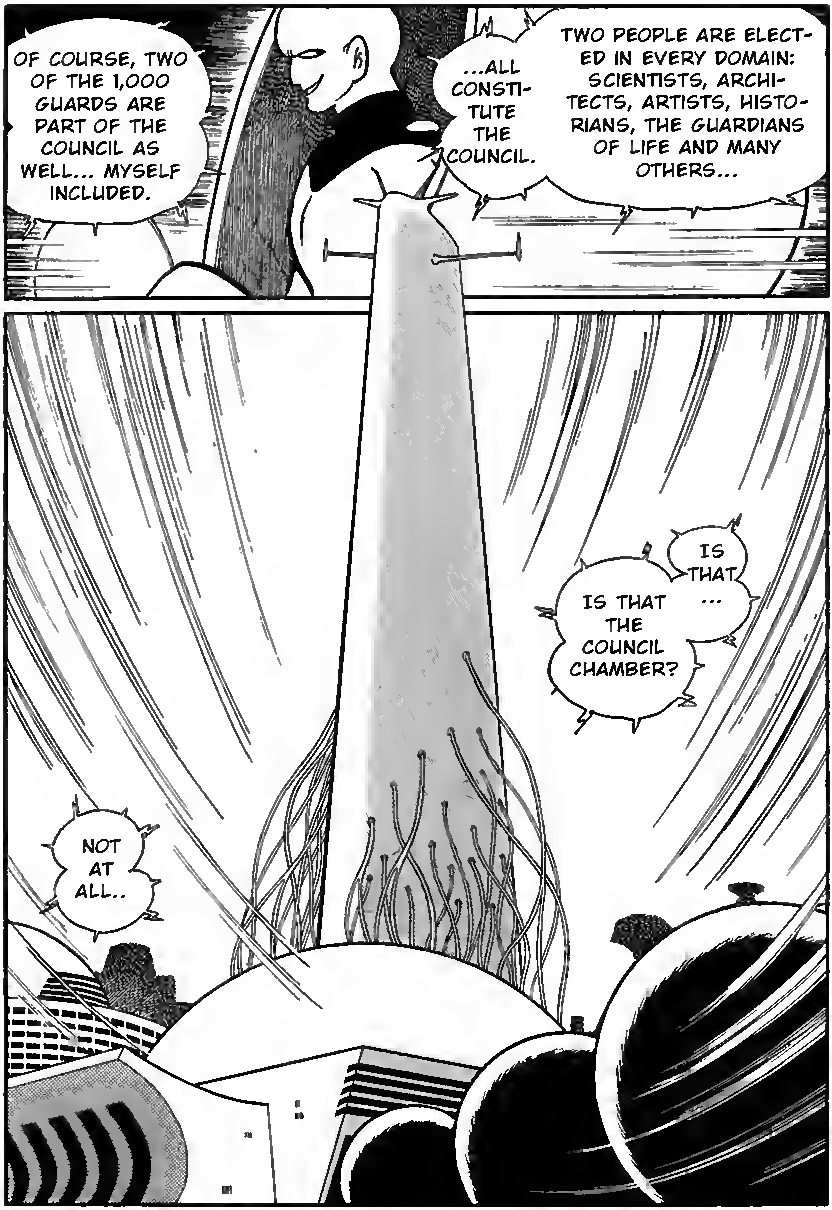

"A DE-FORMED"? THE HELL DOES THAT MEAN?
SO ARE YOU A "DE-FORMED"?
YOU HAVE A THIRD EYE, HUH?
AND YES, THAT MEANS THE HEAD-BAND TOO
OF COURSE
SORRY FOR THE VIEW.
EH HEH HEH...
ONE WHO IS LESS THAN HUMAN.
IN OTHER WORDS, A "VARIANT OF SUB-HUMAN".
A HUMAN BEING OF UNUSUAL SHAPE.
WHY SUCH ANGER?
CON-DOR! CALM DOWN.
IF ANY-ONE'S A "SUB-HUMAN", IT'S YOU!
WHAT'S THAT SHIT TALK? I'M PERFECTLY HUMAN!
WHAT?

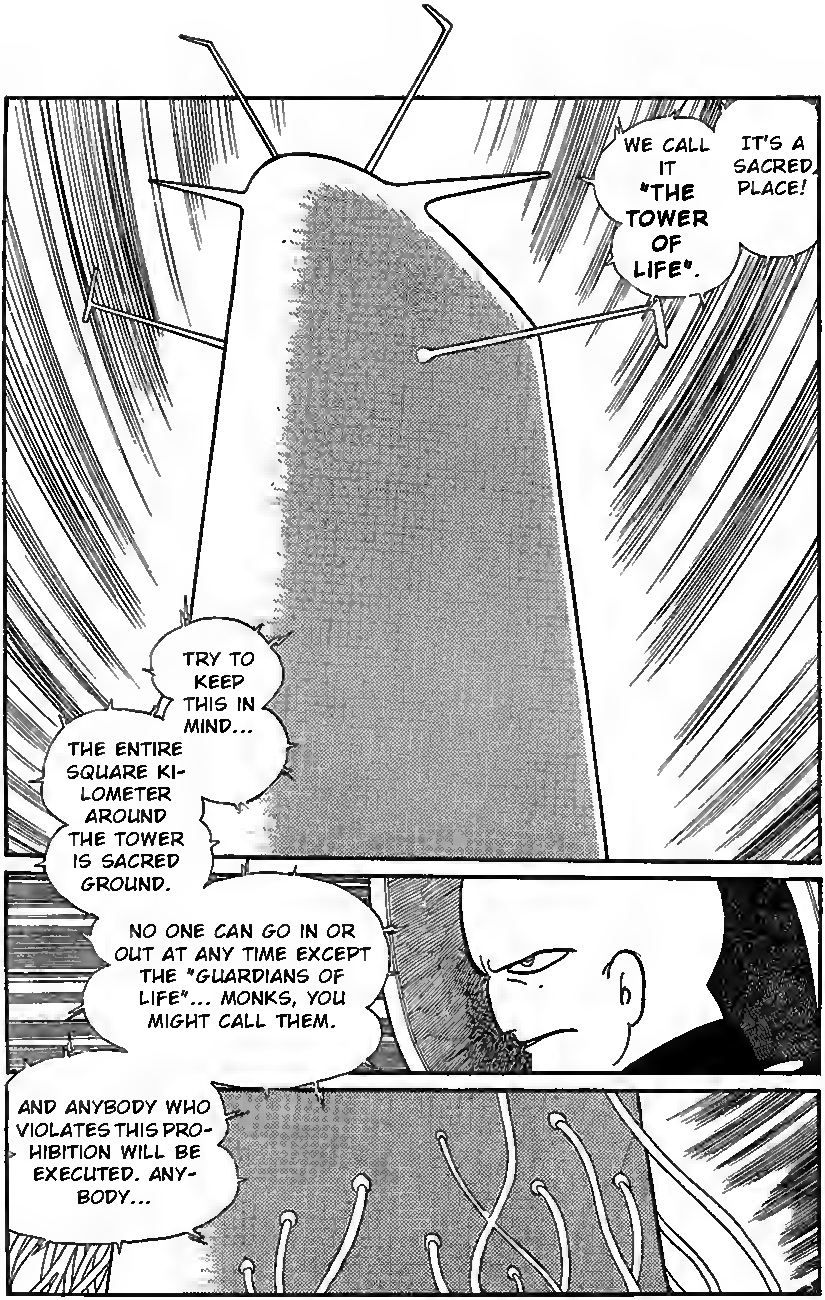

"DE-FORMED" IS JUST WHAT WE SAY FOR SHORT.
...ACCORDING TO THE "NEWMEN" SCIENTISTS.
"VARIANT OF SUB-HUMAN" IS THE BIOLOGICAL TERM...
WHAT'S UP WITH THAT DICK?
YOU LOOK MORE LIKE THE "DEFORMED" ONE TO ME.
"BIOLOGICAL TERM"?
HEE HEE HEE HEE ...
CONDOR!
CUT IT OUT!
I'VE SEEN BABIES WHO HAD BIGGER THAN THAT!
I MEAN, IS IT ACTUALLY A DICK OR WHAT?
HEE HEE HEE ...
IT'S ALL ABOUT SIZE, IS IT? JUST PROOF THAT HUMANS AND THE DEFORMED ARE NO BETTER THAN ANIMALS.

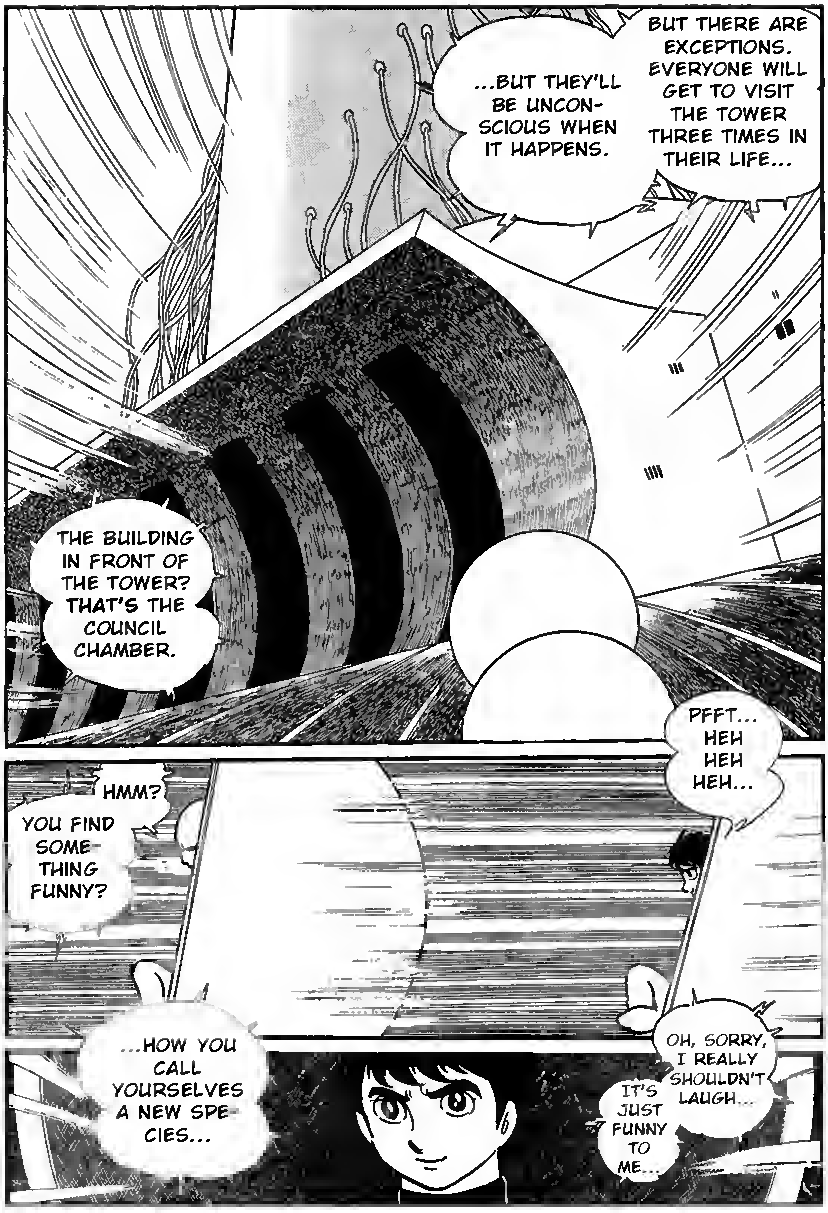

THE HELL WAS THAT?
IT'S A DISIN-FECTANT BEAM.
AH!
THE ADVISERS ARE WAITING.
NOW LET'S GET A MOVE ON.
SWALLOW THESE TOO.
THE OUTSIDE WORLD IS DIRTY.
WHAT'S THIS?
IT'S OUR RULE TO BE PURIFIED FROM THE INSIDE OUT WHEN RE-TURNING FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
IT'S THE SAME AS THE BEAM, JUST AP-PLIED INTER-NALLY.
IT'S NOT POISON, DON'T WORRY.

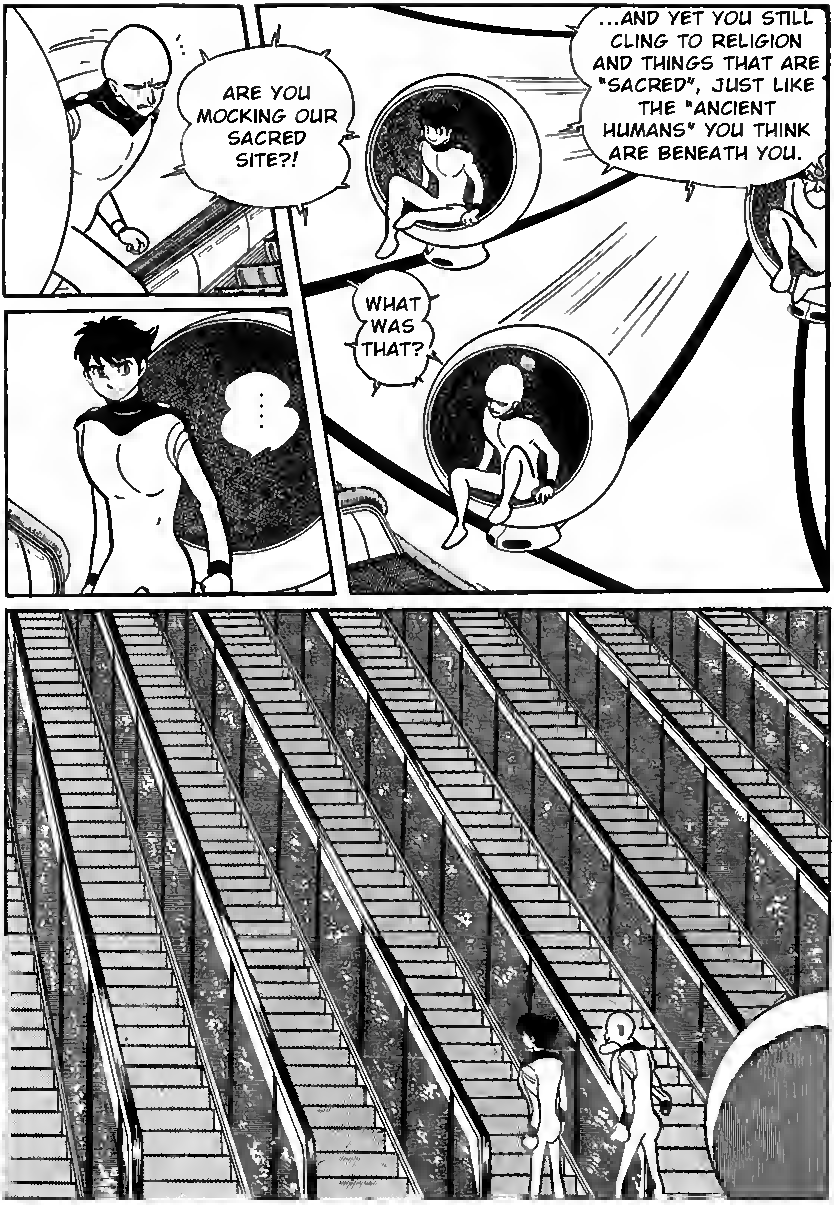
I HAD TO THROW THEM OUT.
WHERE DID MY CLOTHES GO, ANYWAY?
AND MY GUN?
IT'S THE GUARDS' UNI-FORMS.
YOUR CLOTHES WERE FULL OF IMPURI-TIES.
HERE, WEAR THESE.
YOU SAY "DISIN-FECT", BUT YOU REALLY WANTED TO DISARM US, ISN'T THAT IT? I'M ONTO YOU...
FEH.
WHEN-EVER YOU'RE READY...
WE'LL HEAD FOR THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

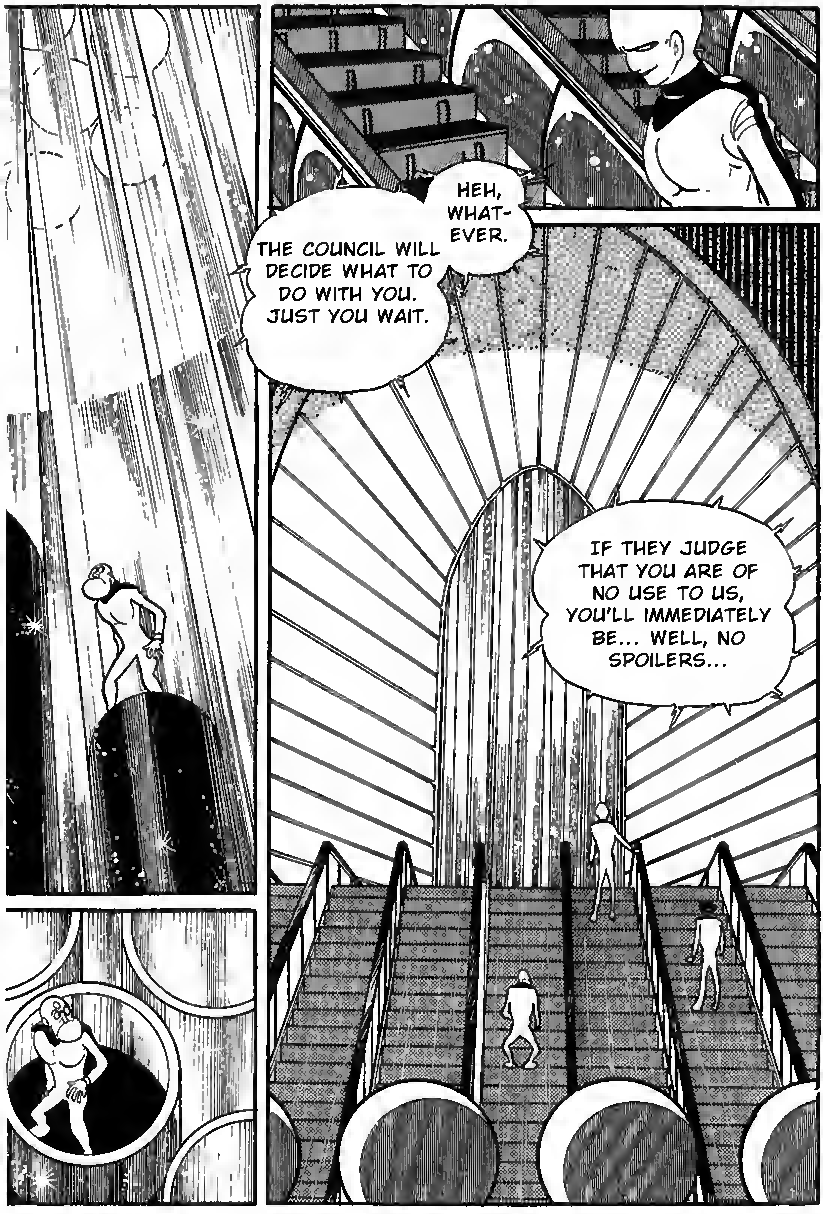

IT IS THE COUNCIL WHO REPRESENTS OUR COUNTRY.
BUT IN NEWMAN'S LAND, THERE IS NO CHIEF OF STATE, NO PRESIDENT OR PRIME MINISTER.
YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO SPEAK TO OUR LEADERS... WELL, NOW YOU'RE ABOUT TO...
JUST WHAT IS THIS COUNCIL YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT?

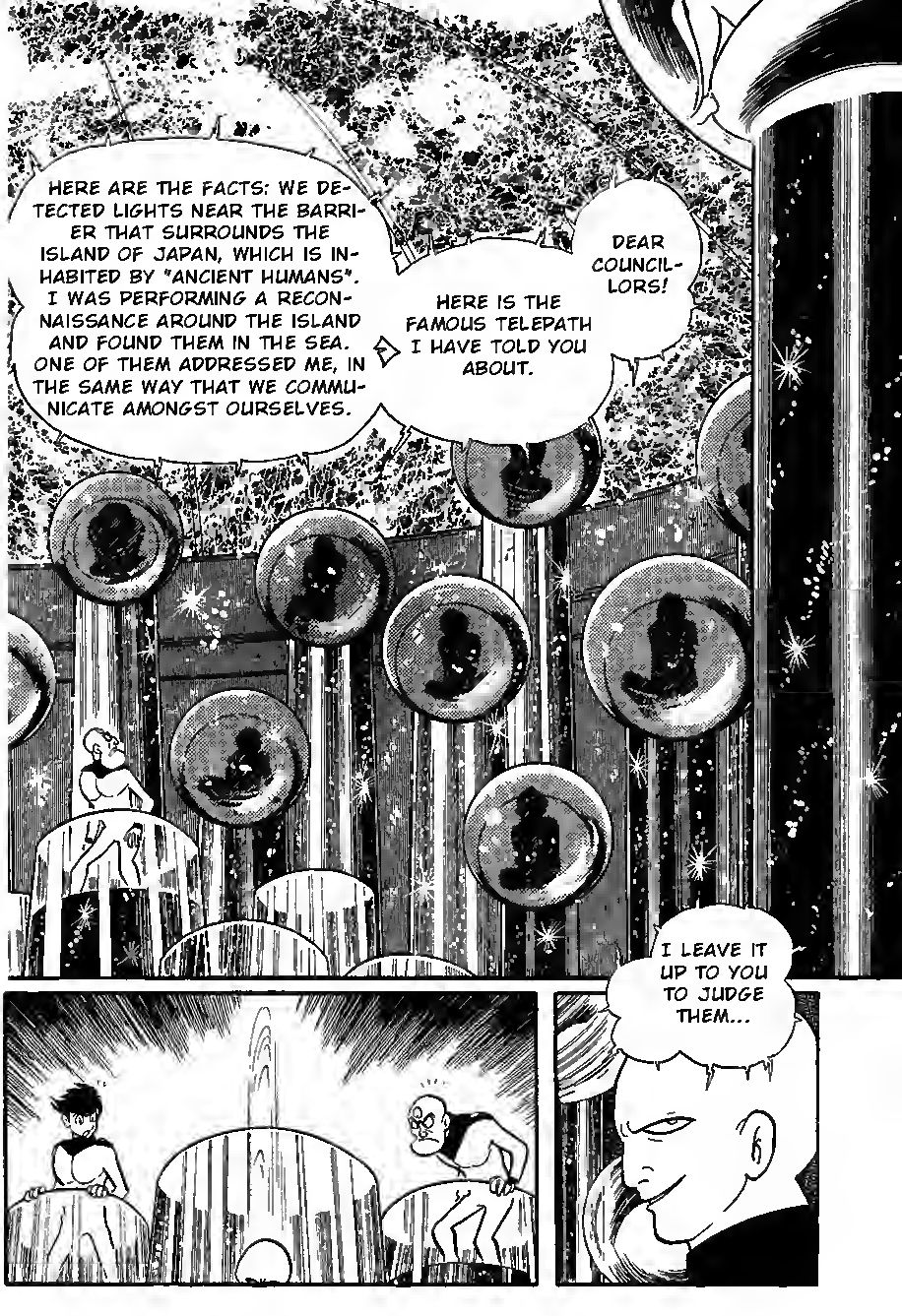

TWO PEOPLE ARE ELECTED IN EVERY DOMAIN: SCIENTISTS, ARCHITECTS, ARTISTS, HISTORIANS, THE GUARDIANS OF LIFE AND MANY OTHERS...
...ALL CONSTITUTE THE COUNCIL.
OF COURSE, TWO OF THE 1,000 GUARDS ARE PART OF THE COUNCIL AS WELL... MYSELF INCLUDED.
IS THAT ...
IS THAT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER?
NOT AT ALL..

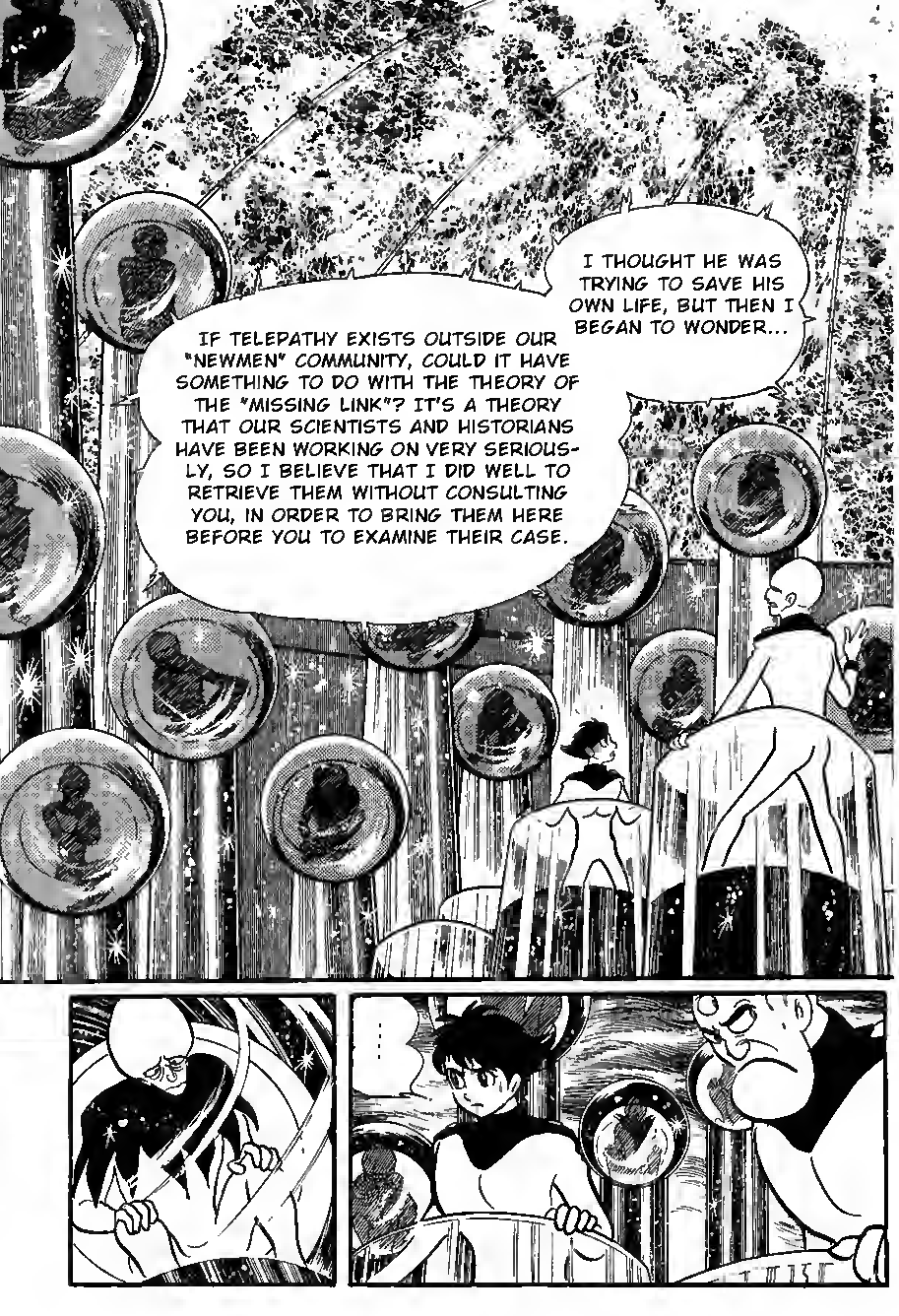

IT'S A SACRED PLACE!
WE CALL IT "THE TOWER OF LIFE".
TRY TO KEEP THIS IN MIND...
THE ENTIRE SQUARE KILOMETER AROUND THE TOWER IS SACRED GROUND.
NO ONE CAN GO IN OR OUT AT ANY TIME EXCEPT THE "GUARDIANS OF LIFE"... MONKS, YOU MIGHT CALL THEM.
AND ANYBODY WHO VIOLATES THIS PROHIBITION WILL BE EXECUTED. ANYBODY...


...BUT THEY'LL BE UNCONSCIOUS WHEN IT HAPPENS.
BUT THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS. EVERYONE WILL GET TO VISIT THE TOWER THREE TIMES IN THEIR LIFE...
THE BUILDING IN FRONT OF THE TOWER? THAT'S THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.
PFFT... HEH HEH HEH...
HMM? YOU FIND SOMETHING FUNNY?
...HOW YOU CALL YOURSELVES A NEW SPECIES...
OH, SORRY, I REALLY SHOULDN'T LAUGH...
IT'S JUST FUNNY TO ME...


ARE YOU MOCKING OUR SACRED SITE?!
...AND YET YOU STILL CLING TO RELIGION AND THINGS THAT ARE "SACRED", JUST LIKE THE "ANCIENT HUMANS" YOU THINK ARE BENEATH YOU.
WHAT WAS THAT?
...


HEH, WHAT-EVER.
THE COUNCIL WILL DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH YOU. JUST YOU WAIT.
IF THEY JUDGE THAT YOU ARE OF NO USE TO US, YOU'LL IMMEDIATELY BE... WELL, NO SPOILERS...


HERE ARE THE FACTS: WE DETECTED LIGHTS NEAR THE BARRIER THAT SURROUNDS THE ISLAND OF JAPAN, WHICH IS INHABITED BY "ANCIENT HUMANS". I WAS PERFORMING A RECONNAISSANCE AROUND THE ISLAND AND FOUND THEM IN THE SEA. ONE OF THEM ADDRESSED ME, IN THE SAME WAY THAT WE COMMUNICATE AMONGST OURSELVES.
DEAR COUNCILLORS!
HERE IS THE FAMOUS TELEPATH I HAVE TOLD YOU ABOUT.
I LEAVE IT UP TO YOU TO JUDGE THEM...


I THOUGHT HE WAS TRYING TO SAVE HIS OWN LIFE, BUT THEN I BEGAN TO WONDER...
IF TELEPATHY EXISTS OUTSIDE OUR "NEWMEN" COMMUNITY, COULD IT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE THEORY OF THE "MISSING LINK"? IT'S A THEORY THAT OUR SCIENTISTS AND HISTORIANS HAVE BEEN WORKING ON VERY SERIOUSLY, SO I BELIEVE THAT I DID WELL TO RETRIEVE THEM WITHOUT CONSULTING YOU, IN ORDER TO BRING THEM HERE BEFORE YOU TO EXAMINE THEIR CASE.
.....

LET US NOT GET INTO THAT NOW...
WHY DON'T WE LISTEN TO WHAT THE "ANCIENT HUMAN" HAS TO SAY FOR HIMSELF...?
FURTHERMORE, I BELIEVE THAT THIS WHOLE THEORY IS...
HO! THIS TINY HUMAN IS NO "MISSING LINK"... WHAT FOOLISHNESS...
I... WHAT I...
...WHAT I WANT TO SAY... IS...
GO ON.
.....

リュウの道 7 — 完 —

イラストコレクション

講談社「週刊少年マガジン」原載1969年5月16日第21号

人気作品 オール巨弾シリーズ 第1弾

講談社「週刊少年マガジン」原載1969年11月23日第48号

読者のみなさまへ

「石ノ森章太郎萬画大全集」には、年代の古い作品が多数収録されています。それらの作品の中には、今日の人権擁護の見地に照らせば、不適切との指摘を受ける可能性がある語句や表現が用いられている箇所があります。石ノ森章太郎氏は、いつもその時代の風を読みながら新しい作品、表現形態に挑戦し続けた作家であり、差別を意図して描いたことはありませんでした。その作品の中には、その当時の風俗や、時代背景が反映されていて、現在の共通認識とは大きな違いがあるものがあります。私たちが今回、この「石ノ森章太郎萬画大全集」をできるだけ当時のままの形での出版を心がけようとしている背景には、作者が故人であり、作品の改訂がすでに不可能であることと、原作の世界観を尊重したものであります。そしてまた、差別的な表現の問題を考えていく上でも決して適切な処置ではないと考えるからです。石ノ森章太郎氏は、1992年3月に発足した「コミック表現の自由を守る会」の代表として、「差別表現問題」にも積極的に取り組んだ萬画家でした。「有害コミック規制運動」に端を発した過剰な自主規制が、物事の本質を隠蔽してしまう可能性があるだけでなく、コミック表現の可能性にも大きな影響を及ぼそうとしていたからです。もちろん、石ノ森章太郎氏は、差別的な表現の推進者ではなく、今回の全集を通して読まれた方はすでにお分かりのように、作品には、ゆるぎないヒューマニズムが根底に流れていることを感じていただけると思います。先人の努力もあり、現在は、過去に比較すれば、差別問題への認識がかなり進歩を遂げたと言えるかもしれません。しかしながら、差別が全くなくなったわけではありません。今回の全集をきっかけに、過去にさまざまな差別が存在し、いまだ解決しない問題があることを認識し、差別という問題へのご理解を一層深めていただけるようにお願いいたします。

石森プロ／角川書店

石ノ森章太郎萬画大全集

リュウの道 7
石森章太郎

2007年8月31日初版発行

発行人／井上伸一郎
発行／株式会社 角川書店
〒102-8078 東京都千代田区富士見2-13-3
電話／03-3238-8674（編集）
発売／株式会社 角川グループパブリッシング
〒102-8177 東京都千代田区富士見2-13-3
電話／03-3238-8521（営業）
http://www.kadokawa.co.jp

印刷・製本／株式会社廣済堂
装幀・デザイン／株式会社ビエント

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